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# THE MEDICI

BY COLONEL G. F. YOUNG, C.B.

"*Facta ducis vivent, operosaque gloria rerum;*
*Haec manet; haec avidos effugit una rogos.*"—OVID.

"*Nescire autem quid antea quam natus sis acciderit,*
*id est semper esse puerum.*"—CICERO.

WITH PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS
IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. II.

NEW YORK
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*Translation.*]

"The leader's deeds and hard won glory live ;
This remains ; this alone survives the funeral fires."—OVID.

"Not to know the events which happened before one
was born, that is to remain always a boy."—CICERO.

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# THE MEDICI

## CHAPTER XIX

### CATHERINE DE' MEDICI

*Born* 1519. (*Married* 1533.) *Died* 1589.

#### (1) THE FIRST FORTY YEARS OF HER LIFE

MODERN history has requirements of which former generations seldom dreamt. In former days the method which as a rule commended itself to both writer and reader was one by which characters in history were labelled as "bad" or "good," and little attempt made at any further discrimination. The fact was lost sight of that, since real characters are more complex than this, such a method produces figures unlike any men or women who ever lived, and so gives us distorted views of history. Again, while much more information is available now than formerly, it is also coming to be seen that actions belonging to a bygone age must be judged upon a different principle to that hitherto in vogue. Thus a writer of our time has pointed out that "while with a former generation it was natural to lavish indiscriminate condemnation upon all characters in history who took a different course to that which would now be taken by any one,

modern conceptions of the proper attitude of mind in one who deals with history require him to strive to enter impartially into the feelings of all his characters."[1]

In order to avoid that tendency to create impossible figures which is so severely condemned by the modern view of the matter, and arrive at that more discriminate estimate of historical characters now deemed imperative, probably no requirement is more essential than that we should put ourselves mentally into the atmosphere of the time, and carefully guard against judging such characters by the standards of our own age (in which persons live and act under totally different conditions), instead of in relation to the opinions and conditions of their day. Looked at in the latter way, those who were in advance of the moral standard of their time, and those who were behind it, will both be correctly judged; but neither of them will be so if the standard employed is that of our own age.

The foregoing considerations are more important in the case of Catherine de' Medici than perhaps of any other figure in history. For we have in her case an exceptional combination of incentives to the production of a fictitious character. In the first place, the marriage arranged for her by Clement VII. in his scheme for outwitting Charles V. produced a rooted prejudice against her from the very first in the minds of the French, who felt that in her person the honour of the nation had received a grievous insult, it being a galling

[1] Salmon's *Infallibility of the Church.*

wound to French *amour propre* that the son of their king should marry one of *bourgeois* extraction. This feeling steadily increased among the French people (whose favourite name for her was "the Italian woman"), growing from prejudice into hatred, and causing the contemporary French writers to credit her with numberless crimes; "so that, in fact," says a modern French writer, "it would seem from them that scarcely any crime could be committed in any part of France without its being attributed in some way to Catherine de' Medici." The result has been to make any reliable account of her actions practically unobtainable from them.

But this is not all. The intense prejudice caused by this wound to national pride would alone have sufficed to furnish us with a record from the contemporary French writers calculated to produce a very false picture of the person concerned. But to this were subsequently added two other influences tending in the same direction: viz., the effects of a bitter religious conflict, calling forth animosities which knew no bounds in attributing every crime and evil motive to religious opponents,[1] and the delight in tales of crime felt to an unusual degree by the people of that age. Seldom have three such powerful inducements for the production of a fictitious character been combined in connection with one individual; and this combination of national prejudice, religious

[1] Catherine received a double portion of this, according as her policy brought her into collision, now with one and now with the other of the two religious parties. While again in other cases the Roman Catholic party falsified her words and actions in order to show that in what they did they had the Queen on their side.

animosity, and appetite for sensation produced a result in the case of Catherine de' Medici surpassing anything of the kind to be seen elsewhere. The consequence has been that a character has been presented to us which was a radical impossibility; we were asked to believe that it was possible for a woman to have governed an important state for nearly thirty years, enacted many excellent measures for the better administration of justice, intervened constantly between enemies anxious to destroy each other, been throughout life a peacemaker, saved the lives of persons who were her opponents, been greatly liked by various persons of unimpeachable character, and been at the end of her life sufficiently respected by the people of Paris, even when they were in a state of violent rebellion, to be able to pass unprotected through the barricaded streets when no one else could do so, and yet at the same time to have been a prodigy of duplicity and crime, committing murders wholesale. And such a combination being so completely incongruous, it is not surprising that we find a modern French writer saying:—"Catherine de' Medici has been so greatly disfigured as to make her, so to say, unrecognisable; . . . a phantasmagoric personage."[1]

The gradual publication, however, of the State papers of various countries,[2] including Catherine's own voluminous correspondence, is slowly dispelling the errors which this cloud of misrepresentation has gathered round her; with the result that the traditional view about her is slowly giving

[1] *Women of the Valois Court,* by Imbert de Saint-Amand (1900).

[2] *See* page 5 (footnote). The information furnished by these State papers has been the chief source relied upon in this history of Catherine de' Medici. (*See* also footnote to p. 74.)

place to a more correct estimate of her character and actions.[1]

Three things are necessary in order to estimate the character of Catherine de' Medici correctly. First, to measure sixteenth-century actions by sixteenth-century standards of thought and opinion, and not by those of the twentieth century. Second, to give the same weight to facts which tell in her favour as to those which tell against her; as would be done in a court of law. Third, to look with very close scrutiny at any argument which urges that some action of hers in itself praiseworthy should not be held to be so in her case, since it was merely an artifice of "duplicity"; and to require corroborative testimony of facts in support of all such statements.

The course commonly adopted has been the exact reverse of this. It has been that of measuring her actions by the standard, not of her time, but of ours; of giving full weight to, and even exaggerating, all that tells against her, while giving little weight to actions telling in her favour, on the ground that she was "a mass of indifference,"[2] or in some other way devoid of the feelings which ordinarily prompt such actions —all of which is pure assumption; and, lastly,

[1] The chief information of the above kind which has in recent years become available is that furnished by the following:—
Spanish State Papers (1558-1603), 7 vols.; published in 1894.
Venetian State Papers (1202-1607), 10 vols.; published in 1900.
Foreign State Papers, London (1558-1580), 13 vols.; published in 1903.
Catherine de' Medici's letters (largely from the Russian State Papers). Edited by Count Hector de La Ferrière and G. Baguenault de Puchesse; published in 1903.

[2] *See* Miss Sichel's *Catherine de' Medici*, p. 5.

where this course is inapplicable, of declaring such actions to be due to duplicity. All this has been done in order to avoid a certain dilemma which occurs in Catherine's case, caused by the fact that a person whom it is considered necessary to portray as "a villain"[1] has to be credited with a number of actions incompatible with that hypothesis; so that, unless these are explained away, there is produced a figure which is palpably an impossible one.

And yet, after all, this dilemma has not been avoided. Again and again, by writer after writer, we find Catherine called an "enigma,"[2] a "paradox,"[2] a "mystery," or declared to "unite in her character the most discordant and contradictory qualities." And even writers who have been most painstaking in investigating the details of her life have none the less felt themselves impelled to use these terms in an endeavour to escape from this dilemma. But an impossible character is not made less impossible by calling it an enigma; so that this still leaves the dilemma unremoved.

Catherine de' Medici is an "enigma" only to those who start from the basis that she was a villain, and having taken that as an axiom, then find (however much is explained away) that there remain various qualities in her, and actions done by her, which fit so ill with that axiom that all attempt to reconcile the two has to be abandoned. But those who, divesting their minds of the preconceived ideas implanted by the biassed writers of a time of abnormally bitter conflict, judge

[1] *See* Miss Sichel's *Catherine de' Medici*, p. 5.
[2] *Idem*, pp. 15 and 19.

Catherine's character as it is now revealed in the fuller light available from the State papers of various countries, who measure her actions in due relation to the conditions and standards of her time, and, lastly, who take equally into consideration the light shades with the dark, will find Catherine de' Medici no enigma at all, but a character, remarkable indeed for energy, ability, and other striking qualities, but yet thoroughly harmonious and easy to understand. Not perhaps so well adapted for sensational methods of treatment, but at all events *real*: a living character, not an impossible phantom.

It is remarkable to see in how many ways Catherine shows herself a true representative of the family of whose elder branch she was the last descendant. The abnormal ability and energy, the love of learning, fondness for field sports, artistic taste, common-sense, power to sway those brought into contact with her, and love of ruling, due to the conscious possession of superior powers, all these characteristics which had been prominent in her ancestors appear again in fullest strength in her. It is also evident that she had much of that same many-sided character which we have seen recorded of her great-grandfather, Lorenzo the Magnificent,[1] and seen described as so difficult for the northern races of Europe to understand, and as often causing him, too, to be styled by them, with as little reason, an "enigma" and a "mystery."

Coming to other points more strictly personal

[1] Chap. ix. pp. 299-300.

to herself, the first we notice is that she was undoubtedly cold and unimpassioned. And she had need to be so, if she was to survive to the age of seventy in a position of authority in such a stormy time as was hers. In this she is the counterpart of two other prominent women of her age, Queen Elizabeth of England and Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre. At the same time it may be doubted whether Catherine had as much of this quality as either of the other two, and whether a great part of the appearance which she presented of a cold and unimpassioned nature was not due to her abnormal power of self-control. It is admitted by all authorities that her love for her husband, Henry II., was intense, and that his indifference to her was the great grief of her life; while her affection, in her youth for the nuns of the Murate convent, in middle age for her son Henry, and in old age for her daughter-in-law Louise de Vaudemont and her granddaughter Christine of Lorraine, shows that she was not incapable of such feelings. Many accounts credit her with marked love for her children, but, with the exception of her son Henry, it may be doubted whether these statements are not mere courtly flatteries. She was exceedingly careful of her children's health and training, but there it would seem to have ended, and she at times treated them with great harshness.

But most prominent of all the features in Catherine's character were the allied qualities of prudence and self-control. This self-control was in her developed to a degree which bordered upon the marvellous, being such as has been seen in

few other individuals. It is constantly referred to as amazing all around her. With it was combined a no less frequently mentioned "prudence"; by which term the writers of that day implied a good deal more than the meaning which we now attach to it. But in her it was, so to say, a prudence run mad, a prudence which had been allowed to absorb all other faculties. All thoughts, all feelings, all desires were, with an iron will, drilled into subjection to this prudence, this unsleeping, incessant care at all times, in all places, under all circumstances, to look, to do, and to speak only that which would advance the matter in hand. Her daughter, the Princess Marguerite (who stood in much awe of her), speaks of her as, "She from whose soul prudence was never parted, who moderated her actions according to her desire, demonstrating plainly that the discreet person doeth nothing he willeth not to do." This feature in Catherine's character was the outcome (as will be seen[1]) of an unusually severe trial, lasting for many years. She was not always like this. But she grew to be so under the peculiar conditions of her life from the age of twenty to that of forty. And it is this rigid prudence and self-control which makes us feel her to be so unhuman. She appears to have, in one sense, neither faults nor virtues, and to be as flawless, and as unattractive, as a bar of finely-tempered steel. As has been said, it was the force of dire conditions which fashioned Catherine the emotional girl, possessed of "sweetness of disposition" and "amiable ways,"[2] into Catherine the prudent (and

[1] Page 46. [2] Page 23.

icy) woman. But though it was her misfortune, not her fault, it gave her a characteristic which is perhaps most of all resented by mankind.

It is, however, a mistake to imagine that Catherine was a person of stone. The best judges of her conduct were, not the French, but the ambassadors of other powers living at the court of France, especially those of Venice; and from the recently published Venetian State Papers, and the very full reports[1] which the Venetian ambassadors in succession furnished to their Government of all these events, we obtain invaluable information by which to judge of all such points. Thus, for instance, on this point of her outward appearance of indifference and want of feeling the Venetian ambassador, Giovanni Correr, in one of his reports to his Government, writes:—

"I know that she hath often been found weeping in her chamber; but she at once dried her eyes and dissembled her sadness; and in order to mislead those who estimated the state of affairs by the expression of her countenance, she wore a calm and joyous aspect when abroad."

Although we find some (even among those Protestant writers who hated her with a rancorous hatred), speaking of her "astonishing evenness of temper," she had in reality a hot (though not revengeful) temper. But her abnormal power of self-control never suffered this to appear when it would interfere in any way with her object. When, however, this was not the case her wrath could show itself in a manner terrifying to those around her. The Princess Marguerite, describing

[1] Often written in cipher.

one of these outbursts, says:—"Elle jetait feu, et disait tout ce qu'une colère outrée et démesurée peut jeter dehors." Another trait in Catherine, inherited from ancestors who were Florentine citizens, among whom this quality was, and still is, greatly prized, was a never-failing *bonhomie*—a spirit always ready with a laugh, a joke, and a cheerful countenance even in the midst of hardships and misfortunes. Her attainments were of a high order. She was well read and accomplished; she brought to France that love of learning and art inherent in her family; she took a special interest in science; while evidence of her innate artistic taste was in after years furnished by Fontainebleau, Chenonceaux, the Louvre, the Tuileries, and every other palace which she occupied.

Other qualities which we find constantly mentioned are, her great personal courage, power of enduring physical pain without showing any sign, and agreeable manners. The remaining features of her character will be more conveniently considered when we come to look at her as ruler of France.[1] As regards her appearance, the chief points which we find noted by contemporary historians are, her broad forehead, fair hair, fine eyes, beautiful hands, and tall, graceful figure. Her life divides itself into three well-marked periods: viz., fourteen years of girlhood, twenty-six years of married life, and thirty years of widowhood, during the greater part of which she was the all-powerful Queen Regent of France.

[1] Chap. XX.

### FIRST PERIOD (1519-1533)

Catherine, the only child of Lorenzo (Duke of Urbino) and his young wife, Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne, belonging to the Bourbon branch of the royal family of France, was born in the Medici Palace on the 13th April 1519, and at her baptism was given the names of Catherine Maria Romola. She is well called in history Catherine de' Medici, for while she was the last of that elder branch of the Medici which had had such a great career, in her all the mental capacity of her family (which her father and grandfather had failed to show) reappeared as strongly as ever, and in this its latest descendant Cosimo's branch showed no smallest sign of deterioration.

When Catherine was born her father, her mother, her grandmother, Alfonsina Orsini, and her father's aunt, Maddalena Cibò, all lay dying,[1] the two former at the Medici Palace, and the two latter at the villa of Careggi. Catherine's mother died a fortnight after her daughter's birth, and her father six days later, while Maddalena Cibò and Alfonsina Orsini both died shortly afterwards. The orphan baby was thus left without any near relations (except her aunt, Clarice Strozzi, who was in Rome), and she remained in charge of servants, a solitary little scion of the nearly extinguished family in that Medici Palace which had again become "too large a house for so small a family."[2]

Ariosto,[3] touched by the friendless condition

[1] It is stated that when Lorenzo was dying at the Medici Palace his mother was unable to go to him as she was herself on her death-bed at Careggi, so that they were unable to see each other.

[2] Vol. i. p. 130.

[3] Ariosto had come to Florence in 1513 to study the Tuscan idiom.

of this lonely little flower round which so many rough winds blew, wrote at this time regarding her (speaking as for Florence):—

"Verdeggia un ramo sol con poca foglia;
E fra tema e speranza sto sospesa
Se lo mi lasci il verno, o lo mi taglia."[1]

Being the sole heiress of the possessions and claims of the Medici family this baby girl was a small person of much importance. On her father's death her distant relative, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, came to Florence to take charge of the Government and of herself. We have seen the far-reaching schemes which he formed regarding her future and that of the family, and the use that he would make of this orphan girl to advance the latter. And we have seen in what some of those schemes resulted. But we have now to look at Catherine herself, and at her life from the time when she first looked on the world from the windows of the Medici Palace in the Via Larga, Florence.

Her childhood was passed in the midst of stormy episodes, the rage of furious mobs, the clash of arms, and the sound of guns. When she was six months old she was taken to Rome (a difficult journey for a baby in those days, and performed by her probably in a pannier on a mule's back), and was placed by her great-uncle, Leo X., in the charge of her aunt, Clarice Strozzi. She remained at Rome till she was six, by which time Cardinal Giulio had become Pope

[1] "A solitary branch becomes green with a few leaves;
And I am in suspense between fear and hope
Whether winter will spare it to me, or tear it from me."

Clement VII., and the commotions were beginning which ended in the sack of the Vatican. As, therefore, Rome was becoming too disturbed a residence, she was, in 1525, sent back to Florence to her home in the Medici Palace, where she was placed under the charge of Cardinal Passerini, at that time governing Florence in the Medici interest, and in whose charge were also the two boys of sixteen and fourteen, Ippolito and Alessandro: the former much liked, but the latter cordially detested, by the six-year-old Catherine.

For the next two years Catherine remained amidst these surroundings, lessons in the various subjects then considered necessary for every well-born girl[1] occupying most of her time, varied by frequent battles with Alessandro, the quarrels between the two becoming at last so pronounced that Alessandro was sent away to live at the villa of Poggio a Caiano. Then, when Catherine was eight years old, there took place in Rome the catastrophe of 1527, and news reached Florence that the Papal city had been taken and sacked and awful horrors perpetrated, and that the Pope was being besieged in the castle of St Angelo. The consternation in the Medici Palace was great, especially as it was soon known that the Signoria had assembled and were debating whether Florence should revolt from Pope Clement and banish the Medici family. And that might mean death, or at the least much danger and hardship, and the palace would almost certainly be plundered of everything by the mob (as it was), and to what

[1] *See* chap. xxii. pp. 181-182.

city could they go, since both Rome and all places in the Papal dominions and in the Tuscan state would be barred to them?

These questions Cardinal Passerini sat discussing in much distress of mind with Ippolito and Alessandro on the 19th May 1527, and Catherine certainly listened. And then their deliberations were broken in upon by Catherine's capable and loud-voiced aunt, Clarice, in the manner which we saw; and they were bidden to depart without delay from Florence. But not the little "Duchessina," as Catherine was called;[1] for while the rest, with their retainers, in the utmost confusion and terror, packed a few necessary things and made a hurried departure by the exit at the back of the palace into the Via de' Ginori, and while the mob, which had been for several hours collected in the Via Larga, began to pour into and plunder the palace, she was ordered by the Government to remain behind, to be kept as a prisoner of the Republic, who intended to use her as a valuable hostage in the case of future difficulties with Pope Clement. The terror suffered by a child of eight thus kept behind in the midst of such a scene of confusion in order to be immured amongst strangers as a prisoner, was naturally great; and we see what an impression it made upon Catherine by her conduct three years later when bidden to leave the convent of the Murate. Thus did Catherine begin at an early age her apprenticeship to a trouble-tossed life.

She was first sent to the convent of Ognissanti,

[1] Though, of course, she had no right to the title, the rightful Duke of Urbino having regained his duchy five years before.

and was kept there for six months. Thence she was removed suddenly by night, on the 7th December 1527, to the convent of "Le Murate," on the opposite side of Florence, at the far end of the long Via Ghibellina, close under the walls of the city. The plague was at that time raging in Florence, and we read how this change of prison entailed on Catherine "a long walk by night through the plague-stricken streets." The convent of *Le Murate* ("the walled-up ones")[1] was the most important convent in Florence, being that patronised by all those ladies of the principal Florentine families who took the veil; and here Catherine remained for nearly three years, until she was eleven years old. The chief points insisted upon in regard to her were that she was to be kept in safe custody, that there was to be no communication allowed between her and any friends of her family in the city, and that her education was to be duly attended to. This point of Catherine's education is one much discussed in the correspondence of the time, and the nuns of the Murate certainly appear to have done their part well in this respect, for Catherine, though she left all compulsory education behind her at fourteen, was one of the most highly educated women of her day. The Murate also prided itself on its teaching of deportment and polite behaviour; and

[1] The name was due to the ceremony with which each of the nuns was admitted, viz., by a portion of the wall of the convent being opened for her entrance, and bricked up again behind her. But it was, of course, purely a symbolical ceremony, and the convent had its regular doorway: as, in fact, we see from the narrative of Catherine's removal thence. So that the whole of what Trollope says on this point, and as to there being "other entrances known to the initiated," and its inculcation of duplicity, and so on, is entirely erroneous and misleading.

in this respect no less than in learning Catherine in her after life did the nuns credit, for almost every historian enlarges upon her pleasing and agreeable manners.

It is in this time spent at the Murate that we have the first indications of Catherine's character. We are told, by various writers who deal with her life as a girl, of her kind and amiable ways; and this seems borne out by the fact that the nuns of the Murate (a convent where there were notably many discords) became extremely fond of her. And long afterwards we find Catherine on her side still cherishing kindly remembrances of them, and writing to them constantly in the most affectionate terms. In her letters, written more than forty years later, when she was Queen Regent of France, she delights to recall the daily life of the convent, and the beautiful garden, with the Arno flowing near it, which she has not seen for all those years; and lapses into poetry as she speaks of the view looking up the river, saying:—

"Monti superbi, la cui fronte Alpina
Fa di se contro i venti argine e sponda!
Valle beate, per cui d'onda in onda
L'Arno con passo signoril cammina!"[1]

Here Catherine spent the most peaceful time of her life, though even during it there were rough winds blowing round her outside the walls of the Murate; for it was felt that her death, as the last legitimate offspring of the elder branch of the Medici, was eminently desirable in the

[1] "Glorious mountains, whose Alp-like summits
Make against the winds a barrier and defence!
Happy valleys, through which in wave on wave
The Arno with lordly step takes his way!"

interests of the Republic. During nearly the whole of her last year at the convent the city was being besieged by the army which her relative the Pope had sent against it; fighting took place almost daily; and as men's passions grew more inflamed in this fierce struggle between the Republic and its enemies, there were not wanting those who made various disgraceful proposals for getting rid of this heiress of the Medici family, and she was aware that her death was at any moment possible. Once during this period a member of the Republican Government proposed that she should be suspended in a basket from the walls as a target for the enemies' bullets; while another member,[1] furious at Clement's conduct, suggested an even worse method of disposing of her.

At last, in the summer of 1530, the Government considered that Catherine was growing too popular at the Murate, and that through her presence there a feeling favourable to the Medici was growing up in this important convent, which might become a cause of inconvenient intrigues; they therefore decided to remove her to another abode. Accordingly, on the 20th July, in the middle of the night, the convent was aroused by a loud knocking at the main entrance, with a summons to open in the name of the Republic. The door being opened there appeared three senators, the senior of whom, Salvestro Aldobrandini, presented an order to the frightened nuns to make over to them the girl, Catherine de' Medici. A long parley followed, Catherine feeling certain that this meant that she was going to be put somewhere where her death

[1] Leonardo Bertolini.

could be effected, and protesting with all her might against being given up to them. At last it was urged by the nuns that she should, at any rate, be left alone until the morning; and this was at length conceded. As soon as the senators were gone, Catherine cut off all her hair, put on the dress of a nun of the Murate, and, going to the Mother Superior of the convent, said: "Will they dare now to remove me when they come in the morning, and to appear before the eyes of the people in the streets employed in the crime of forcibly carrying off a nun from her convent?" In the morning, therefore, when the senators again arrived, with a horse for her to ride, Catherine appeared thus dressed before them, dared them to take her away, and refused to take off the dress she had assumed. For hours they argued, and every persuasion was tried without avail; "Catherine was adamant; the horse brought for her remained standing at the door in the street; the struggle of wills continued within." At last they got her as far as the door of the convent, but there the senators said they could not take her thus dressed, and she declared that if she went at all she would go thus, and that nothing should induce her to change her dress. "She refused," says Niccolini, "with wonderful firmness and resolution, declaring that all the world should see that she was a nun being taken forcibly from her convent." In the end she prevailed, and they had to take her with them dressed as she was. They escorted her (presumably by the least frequented streets) to the convent of Sta. Lucia in the Via San Gallo, and this, they informed her, was to be

her new abode. The fact must have been a great relief to Catherine's mind.

This first recorded action of Catherine's life showed that she was no ordinary child; of a girl who could exhibit such force of character at the age of eleven, it might safely be predicted that if she ever came to a position of independent power she would manifest an ability and strength of character equal to that possessed by any of her ancestors. In connection with the same episode, we are also given a second indication of her character; for we are told that she felt lasting gratitude to Salvestro Aldobrandini for his behaviour on this occasion, and the manner in which, though firm to his purpose, he had treated her with politeness and consideration. This she never forgot. More than twenty years afterwards, when their positions were reversed, she being then the powerful Queen of France and Aldobrandini a proscribed heretic and outlaw, sentenced to death by the Pope, she exerted her influence and saved his life. We are told, "He escaped death through the intercession of the grateful Duchessina." Gratitude preserved so long and acted upon in this fashion is rare.

The Murate still stands, though long since abolished as a convent, and still bears out its name by sheltering "walled-up ones"; for it is now the great prison of Tuscany. Its forbidding door in the centre of the high, grim wall remains as when Catherine and the senators of the Republic had there that contest of wills, and recalls the strange scene—the horse which had been waiting before the door for so many hours,

the weeping nuns within the doorway, afraid that their little charge was being taken away to be murdered, the three senators striving to induce the latter to doff her offending attire, and in the midst the small figure in her black dress, with pale, determined face, whom not all their endeavours could shake.

Catherine remained at the convent in the Via San Gallo during the remaining month of the siege, until in August 1530 the city surrendered to the Pope. It does not appear that in the terms of capitulation the Republican Government made any use of the possession of this valuable prisoner; or, if they did so, the result became a dead letter, like so many other provisions of the treaty. As soon as she thus regained her liberty, Catherine "flew back to her beloved nuns at the Murate," and remained there until the spring of the following year (1531), when, it being obvious that she had better not continue to reside in a city to which Alessandro was going to be sent as supreme ruler, Clement VII. sent for her again to Rome, which city she had left as a child of six. There Catherine again met her cousin Ippolito, by this time a general favourite in Rome; and an attachment began to grow up between the girl of twelve and the young man of twenty-two, which might in time have become something stronger had circumstances permitted it. Describing Catherine at this time in his reports, the Venetian ambassador at Rome, Antonio Suriano, says:—"This child has a very lively disposition, and displays a charming wit. She owes her education to the care of the nuns of the Murate convent at Florence."

The subject of Catherine's marriage now began to be debated at the Papal court. Among the aspirants were the King of Scotland, the Duke of Mantua, and the Duke of Milan, while the mutual regard between Catherine and her cousin Ippolito also led some to talk of this as the best marriage for her. Infinitely better would it have been for Catherine had this been the alliance chosen; but, as already noted, Clement VII. had other views; and by December 1532 he had privately concluded an arrangement with Francis I. that Catherine should be married to that King's second son, Henry of Orleans. Her appearance at this time, when she was nearly fourteen, is described by the Venetian ambassador at Rome, as "small and slender, with fair hair, thin and not pretty in face, but with the fine eyes peculiar to all the Medici." And he adds: "She has a remarkably kind, gentle, and cordial manner."

The marriage being thus settled, all the arrangements for it were pushed on by the Pope as fast as possible; Catherine was allowed to return for a short time to Florence (where she stayed again at the Murate convent, the Medici Palace being occupied by Alessandro), and was told to be ready to leave there at the end of August to meet the Pope at Nice[1] and accompany him thence to Marseilles, where the marriage was to take place in October. At this time we have an interesting glimpse of her from the contemporary painter and historian, Vasari,[2] who, when

[1] Clement himself went by sea in order to avoid passing through Florence (vol. i. p. 481, footnote).

[2] Afterwards so well known in the time of Cosimo I. as painter, architect, and the historian of the lives of the painters.

she was about to leave Florence never to see it again, writes thus:—

"She well deserves that we should wish to keep her portrait among us on account of her kind and amiable ways. Her sweetness of disposition cannot be painted, and of that my brush[1] can secure us no memorial."

These words will seem strange to those who have no other mental picture of Catherine de' Medici than the traditional one. But they are written by Vasari in a private letter to an intimate friend, and she who is thus spoken of was removing permanently to a distant country where it was not probable that she would ever meet Vasari again. So that there is practically no doubt that these praises, attributing to her a character universally and deservedly liked, represent the truth. These words of Vasari, written under such circumstances, together with the reports of the Venetian ambassador at Rome, and the estimation in which she was held at the Murate, where she had so long been intimately known, leave no question as to what Catherine's character was like at the time when she arrived in France to be married to Henry of Orleans.

Catherine left Florence on the 2nd September 1533, after giving a farewell banquet at the Medici Palace to all the noble ladies of Florence, at which as a parting gift they presented her with some splendid embroideries of pearls on cloth of gold.

[1] Evidently some portrait of her was to be kept in Florence, and Vasari was painting it. But this portrait has apparently been lost.

The banquet being over, she left the city at three o'clock, and rode to Poggio a Caiano, where the party slept the first night. She was accompanied to Marseilles by Maria Salviati (her father's first cousin), Caterina Cibò, Filippo Strozzi, and Palla Rucellai. The next day they rode on to Pistoia, and thence travelled to Porto Venere, on the gulf of Spezia, where they embarked by sea for Marseilles, touching at Nice (where they met the Pope), and reaching Marseilles on the 12th October. The fleet as it approached the harbour of Marseilles was a picturesque sight; it consisted of sixty ships, that conveying Catherine having sails of purple cloth embroidered with gold, and being followed by that bearing the Pope, which was covered with a tent of cloth of gold, the deck being carpeted with crimson satin. On landing, a procession of unusual splendour took place through the city; it was headed by a white horse with white trappings, bearing the Host, and led by two equerries also dressed in white. Then followed the Pope, conveyed in his chair borne on men's shoulders, and succeeded by a long procession of bishops and cardinals on horseback, wearing their robes; and lastly Catherine herself, dressed in a robe of gold brocade, and riding by the side of her uncle-in-law, John Stuart, Duke of Albany, who had married her mother's sister, Anne. From every balcony hung costly draperies of velvet and embroidery, while across the streets were festooned countless garlands of the deep-coloured damask roses of Provence mingled with the lilies of France. The two palaces occupied by the Pope and the King of France were separated by a street over which

was thrown a covered bridge, uniting the palaces, and made to form a large hall, which was hung with costly tapestries. In the Galleria degli Arazzi at Florence are to be seen three rooms hung with rich tapestries depicting the festivities held on the occasion of this marriage of Catherine; these furnish an interesting record of the costumes worn on this occasion.

The marriage of Catherine de' Medici[1] and Henry of Orleans took place on the 28th October 1533, in the cathedral of Marseilles. The Pope himself performed the ceremony, and Catherine, who wore a dress of white silk embroidered with precious stones, and ornaments of Florentine gold filigree-work, had round her all the few relations she possessed,[2] viz., the Pope, Ippolito (lately returned from Hungary, and dignified and courteous as ever, though clouded by that permanent sadness which had come over him), Maria Salviati, and Caterina Cibò. Catherine was at this time in her fifteenth year, and Henry of Orleans sixteen. The latter was a dull, taciturn youth; the long and severe imprisonment which he and his elder brother had undergone in Spain, while it had ruined his brother's health, appeared in Henry to have had the effect of clouding his brains; and he was a complete contrast to his brilliant and

[1] In all the State documents connected with her marriage Catherine is always called by the French King and the French historians "the Duchess of Urbino," which much irritated the real Duke of Urbino.

[2] It is significant that Alessandro was not present at Catherine's marriage. Had he *really* been her half-brother he would have been her nearest relative, and his presence at her marriage almost imperative. But Clement VII. had no intention of parading such a connection as Alessandro before the eyes of the French; so, while he insisted on Ippolito being present, he took good care that Alessandro should not be so.

energetic father, Francis I., to whom his second son's heavy and inert character was a constant cause of irritation and contempt.

At this marriage Pope Clement presented two notable gifts, both of which have had a remarkable history. To Catherine herself he gave seven splendid pearls of most unusual size; and these appear in her picture, in the front of her crown.[1] Twenty-five years afterwards Catherine gave these pearls to her daughter-in-law, Mary, Queen of Scots, when the latter married her eldest son; and Mr Cochrane mentions that Mary is represented with them round her neck in a picture at Holyrood Palace. When Elizabeth put Mary to death she not only took her life but also stole her jewels, seizing upon these celebrated pearls which she had always coveted; they thus became part of the English Crown jewels. And after having assisted at many great historic functions, their last public appearance was in the year 1901, when at his coronation His Majesty King Edward VII. wore in his crown the celebrated pearls which Catherine de' Medici had worn in hers.

Clement's other present was given to the bride's father-in-law, Francis I., and was the well-known casket, made by Valerio Vicentino, assisted by his daughter, and carved from transparent rock crystal, depicting twenty-four scenes from the life of Christ, and lined with silver, so as to give an appearance of relief to the engraving. It contained the *pyx* in which the Holy Sacrament was placed on the Thursday of Holy Week, the *pyx* being of fine enamel set with rubies. This casket was one of

[1] *See* Plate XXXIX.

the most valuable presents given on that occasion, and Vicentino was paid two thousand gold crowns for it; while its value is now priceless. In the seventeenth century it found its way back to Florence, and now stands amongst other gems which belonged to the Medici in the Gem Room of the Uffizi Gallery; though how it got back to Italy is a mystery. It was placed by Catherine, during her son Charles IX.'s reign, in a cabinet in the Louvre; apparently it was stolen from the Louvre during the commotions in Paris after the death of Henry III., and the robber, feeling it unsafe to retain so remarkable an object in France, took it to Italy, where, after lying hidden for some forty years, it must have been bought by one of the Medici Grand Dukes—most probably by Ferdinand II.—as it suddenly appears in the catalogue of the Medici gems in 1635, but without any record of when or how it had been obtained.[1]

Having thus followed Catherine's history during the fourteen years of her girlhood, we have next to look at her during the fourteen years that she was the wife of the French King's son, and the twelve years following them during which her husband and herself were King and Queen of France.

[1] Unfortunately the *pyx* which it contained was stolen in 1860.

SECOND PERIOD (1533-1559)

Francis I. had many matters of diplomacy to discuss with the Pope, while there were also various grand festivities to be got through before either of them could leave Marseilles, so that it was a whole month before the King and the Pope parted. Then Clement VII., with all those who had accompanied him, again set sail for Italy, and Francis I., with his brilliant court and his new daughter-in-law, started by road for Avignon to return to his palace at Fontainebleau. Catherine now found herself in an entirely new kind of life; it was Francis's custom to be continually changing his residences, and the Venetian ambassador, Marino Giustiniano, who was ambassador to France from 1532 to 1535, says:—"Never, during my embassy, did the court remain in the same place for more than fifteen consecutive days." Catherine shared in these constant flittings, and by these journeyings from city to city, performed always on horseback, she in a very short time saw a large part of France.

We now obtain accounts of what Catherine was like, both in appearance and character, from a new group of observers, viz., from a fresh set of Venetian ambassadors (those accredited to the court of France), and from those French writers who saw her at the court at this time. The former describe her as "full of vivacity, affable, and distinguished in her manners"; while the French writer, Brantôme (who was then at the court), describing the new bride, says:—

"Her appearance is dignified, but at the same time gracious; her expression is pleasing, and her

taste in dress excellent; she has a fine figure, a white complexion, small feet, very well-shaped hands, and a particularly beautiful voice."

We are also told that she rode remarkably well, was fond of an outdoor life, and had unusually good health.

Francis I. was himself brilliant and cultivated; of him the Venetian ambassador, Marino Cavalli, says:—"Listening to him one recognises that there is neither study nor art which he cannot discuss with much knowledge. . . . His attainments are not limited to war, but include also literature, painting, and the languages."

Francis soon discovered that his new daughter-in-law was of a livelier wit and more highly educated than most of the ladies of his court, and that her *bonhomie* and cleverness made her an agreeable companion; while her love of hunting and other field sports chimed in with his own strong passion for the chase. So he insisted on her accompanying him on all occasions, and Catherine was soon admitted into the charmed circle of his *Petite Bande*, those sparkling and joyous spirits who, like a corps of feminine *aides-de-camp*, accompanied Francis in his progresses from palace to palace: from forest-encircled Fontainebleau to his proud castle of Amboise by the silvery Loire (where Catherine's father and mother had been married soon after Francis succeeded to the throne), and from his sumptuous palace of Les Tournelles in Paris to what is now to us tragedy-haunted Blois, but whose richly decorated chambers then resounded with the laughter and *espièglerie* of the Petite Bande.

This friendship on the part of the King, though a valuable help to Catherine in her new and difficult position (and especially when three years later her enemies found a heavy charge to bring against her), naturally tended to arouse court jealousy. However, Catherine was wise enough to bear herself with proper humility, knowing well how many causes for dissatisfaction the French had against her. We see a glimpse of these latter in the report of the Venetian ambassador, Giustiniano, about this time which says:—

"M. d'Orléans is married to Madame Catherine de' Medici, which dissatisfies the entire nation. It is thought that Pope Clement deceived the King in this alliance. However, his niece is very submissive."

But except for the French King himself Catherine had not a friend in France, and her position was most difficult. Not only was the marriage highly unpopular with both nobles and people, and she herself hated as a *bourgeoise* Italian long before the French had ever seen her, but added to this her relative, Pope Clement, had increased the feeling against her by failing to keep his promises. At Marseilles Catherine had been talked of as bringing to the French Crown "three rings," Genoa, Milan, and Naples. But Clement, when once the marriage was effected and he had got back to Italy, had done nothing to assist the French Crown to gain any one of these dominions. And when in the following year (1534) the Pope died, and Catherine was left without even such support as he afforded her, the feeling against her became intensified. Nor was this all; to these

misfortunes on public grounds was added a more private one. Catherine's husband, Henry, at that time a dull, sheepish, and gloomy youth of whom his father could make nothing, and who on his return from his captivity in Spain three years before had forgotten his own language, disliked her from the first, her brilliancy and cleverness only making his own want of ability the more noticeable. So that the prospect before Catherine was not a bright one: in a foreign country, disliked by her husband, hated by the French nation, despised as a low-born foreigner, and with enemies all around watching for an opportunity of bringing some charge against her which would enable France to get rid of her.

In 1535, two years after her marriage, Catherine heard of the tragic death of her cousin Ippolito, basely poisoned by the hated Alessandro. It must have been a severe blow to her, as he was not only a cousin to whom she was much attached, but also almost her last living relative. Seldom has any one been left at her age so absolutely alone in the world; her aunt Clarice (her father's only sister) was long since dead; her distant relative, Pope Clement, had died in the previous year; and now her only cousin, Ippolito, being also gone, she had no living relations at all, except her father's first cousin, Maria Salviati, who after Catherine's marriage had practically retired from the world. Catherine's isolated state in this respect naturally much increased the difficulty of her position, as she was thus without that powerful support of influential relations which others in like cases have generally possessed. So

that this girl of sixteen, confronted by so many adverse conditions, had nothing but her own ability and strength of character upon which to depend.

In August 1536, when she had been married nearly three years, her husband's elder brother, the Dauphin Francis, who, ever since his harsh confinement in Spain as a boy, had continued in weak health,[1] died suddenly at Tournon. This death of his eldest son was a terrible blow to Francis I., all whose affection was centred on the Dauphin. On hearing at Lyons that he was ill, the King at once prepared to go to him, when, just as he was starting, came the news of his death. And we have a vivid picture drawn of the King's grief, and of how on receiving the terrible news he knelt at the window of his palace, before the whole people, who deeply sympathised with him, and prayed for his son, for his people, and for himself.

It was, of course, immediately said by almost the whole nation that the Dauphin Francis had been poisoned by "the Italian woman," in order that her husband might become the heir to the throne. There has never been found a single particle of foundation for the charge, and every historian considers it was simply due to the national prejudice against Catherine. The accusation was not even based on unpopularity arising from any conduct of her own; for she had been too short a time in France, and too little prominent publicly, to be much known by the people. However, the

[1] *See* vol. i. p. 502 (footnote).

charge was investigated; the Dauphin's cup-bearer, Montecuculli, was accused of having been the agent, and was tortured to make him reveal by whom he had been employed to commit the crime asserted; and under torture, so far from implicating Catherine in any way, he declared the Emperor Charles V. to have been the author of the crime, and adhered to this even at his execution. It is, however, believed that this was almost certainly equally untrue, and it has been pointed out that "a dubious testimony uttered under the anguish of torture is far less credible than the cause assigned by the most unprejudiced historians, viz., that the Dauphin, who was of a sickly constitution, died of having drunk too freely of cold water after over-heating himself at tennis, and not of poison at all." In any case, there is admitted to have been no ground for the accusation against Catherine. But when a prejudice once exists everything that occurs strengthens it, and even the result of Montecuculli's trial did not cause the people to lay aside their suspicion against her. Francis I., however, in spite of his grief, did not share this view, and after the death of the Dauphin lavished every kindness upon her, as though desiring to compensate for the unjust suspicion of his subjects.

This event changed very materially Catherine's position and prospects. Hitherto she and her husband had had no higher destiny to anticipate than that of becoming Duke and Duchess of Milan or some similar state whenever the contest between Francis I. and Charles V. should come

to an end. Now, however, they would in due course become King and Queen of France. But this, though it promoted Catherine to a higher dignity and greater importance at the French court than hitherto, by no means improved her position in other ways. For the wound given to the French by her marriage, grievous when she was merely marrying the second son of their King, was greatly increased by her now becoming the Dauphine, wife of the heir to the throne.

Each year seemed to bring some fresh increase to the difficulties of Catherine's position and the sorrow of her lot. When in the first year after the marriage Pope Clement, her chief bulwark against French disfavour, died; when again in the following year the cousin she had been fond of was murdered, and she was left alone in the world; and when again in the third year the French people persisted in accusing her of having poisoned her brother-in-law notwithstanding every evidence of her innocence, each of these things added yet another drop to a cup which was an unusually bitter one to be drunk by a girl of seventeen. And now there began a still harder trial, one which was to last for twenty years. About the year 1540, when he was twenty-two, her taciturn young husband, Henry, fell completely under the dominion of Diane de Poictiers, the beautiful widow of the Seneschal of Normandy. She ruled him entirely, becoming the leader of the party of the Dauphin at the court (in opposition to the party of the King, which was led by the Duchesse d'Etampes), while Catherine had to stand aside and see herself put in every way in

the background, openly insulted by Diane de Poictiers (who took every opportunity of showing her affronts), and neglected by Henry, who spent most of his time at Diane's great estate of Anet. Catherine bore it in silence and with excellent tact (which was remarked upon with approval even by Francis I., who was greatly irritated by his son's treatment of her); but the way the iron entered into her soul is disclosed by her letters long afterwards to her favourite daughter, in one or two touching allusions to this sorrow borne for years in silence.

About this time a fashionable craze for Protestantism set in at the French court. One outcome of this was a passion for Marot's French psalms, and each person was to be heard singing his or her favourite one on all occasions. We are told that Catherine took a particular affection for one beginning "Vers l'Eternel, des oppressés le Père," which was for ever on her lips, and no doubt appealed to her in consequence of her husband's coldness and neglect, and the prejudice against her evinced by the French people.

The portrait of Catherine,[1] painted at this time, when she was twenty-one years of age, is that which has always been the picture of her preserved in her own family. Though not possessing beauty, she has a fine intelligent face, with the Medici eyes, a broad forehead, and fair hair, the picture

[1] Plate XXXIX. (*Frontispiece*). Three portraits of Catherine are given in this book, one that at the Villa of Poggio a Caiano, taken when she was about twenty-one, a second (Plate XL.) taken when she was about thirty-two, and a third (Plate XLI.) taken when she was about forty.

thus agreeing exactly with the descriptions of her given by Suriano, Vasari, and others at this time.[1] This portrait of her was permanently kept by the Medici family with their other family portraits in their principal villa of Poggio a Caiano, where it and they still hang. The villa and its contents passed from the Medici Grand Dukes to their successors, the Austrian Grand Dukes, and from the latter to the King of Italy, being now the royal villa in Tuscany. Although the painter's name has been lost, the crown, the historic pearls, the agreement with the descriptions of contemporary writers, and above all the locality in which the portrait has always been preserved, leave no doubt as to its authentic character. Painted for Catherine in France by an Italian artist, it was most probably sent by her as a present to her relative, Cosimo I., at the time of his marriage in 1539 to Eleonora di Toledo.

In 1542 another trouble came upon Catherine. Now twenty-three, she had been married for nine years and had no children. This was not only the sorrow it would in any case have been, but also it increased very materially the opportunity of those who had always desired to see her put away, and the slur upon the honour of France removed. Diane de Poictiers did not fail to find here another occasion for wounding the neglected

[1] All the accounts of Catherine's appearance in her girlhood and at the time of her marriage mention that she had fair hair. This she inherited from her mother, Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne. Later on in her life black or dark hair became greatly in fashion in France; and it is probable that when this occurred she dyed her hair dark to accord with the prevailing fashion. This would account for the discrepancy in this particular between her earlier portraits and her later ones by Clouet and others in France.

wife whom she hated; this she did by making a sneering allusion to Francis I. on the subject in the hearing of those who, she knew, would repeat it to Catherine. This was followed by a sort of family conclave at which the matter was formally discussed; and at this Diane, strange to say, was also present, and deliberately urged upon the King that Catherine ought to be divorced; to which Francis I. was reported to have agreed, as being inevitable. At this time only one person showed any kindness to Catherine; moved by pity for the many things she had to bear, Marguerite of Angoulême, Queen of Navarre, Francis I.'s deservedly beloved sister, wrote to Catherine to comfort her, telling her, "My brother will never allow this repudiation, as evil tongues pretend." Reassured by this sympathy, Catherine went to Francis I. and offered to resign her husband and enter a convent, if he willed it. The Venetian ambassador, Lorenzo Contarini, in his report, says:—

"She went to the King and with many tears told him she had heard it was His Majesty's intention to give his son another wife, and as it had not yet pleased God to bestow on her the grace of having children, it was proper that as soon as His Majesty found it undesirable to wait longer, he should provide for the succession to so great a throne; that, for her part, considering the great obligation she was under to His Majesty, who had deigned to accept her as a daughter-in-law, she was much more disposed to endure this affliction than to attempt to oppose his will."

Francis bade her have no fear, and assured her

that he would not allow her to be put away. And in the following year this particular trouble was removed from Catherine by the birth of a son, born at Fontainebleau, who was named Francis after his grandfather. Between 1543 and 1555 she had ten children; three of these died in infancy, but of the remaining seven, four were sons, three of whom (Francis, Charles, and Henry) in turn sat on the throne of France, and three daughters, Elizabeth, who married Philip II. of Spain, Claude, who married the Duke of Lorraine, and Marguerite, who married Henry of Navarre.

In 1547, when Catherine was twenty-eight, and had been married fourteen years, Francis I. died, and her husband became Henry II. of France.[1] This intensified for Catherine both of the evils which she had borne so long in prudent and dignified silence, but with an aching heart. The supposed insult to France in her person, great at her marriage, and greater still when she became the Dauphine, seemed to the French greatest of all now that she was Queen of France; consequently her unpopularity with the people became more pronounced than ever.

But still more than this did Henry's exaltation to the throne increase that which was the chief sorrow of Catherine's life. Henry was now twenty-nine, and no longer dull and stupid as he had been as a youth. Though often given to depression, and fonder of hunting and pleasure than of attending to the affairs of his kingdom, his character had strengthened and improved; and Catherine secretly

[1] Plate XL. Henry II. and Catherine, by Clouet.

PLATE XL.

HENRY II. AND CATHERINE.
By Clouet.

*Burton*] [*Pitti Gallery.*

loved him intensely, though he did not in the least return her affection. It is the opinion of all authorities that the one real passion of Catherine's life was for Henry; but he himself (stated by one of the Protestant writers of the time to be "intoxicated by that baggage, Diane") never either appreciated it, or was even aware of it. And his accession began the great triumph of "Diane de Poictiers, the beautiful huntress, she whom Jean Goujon has sculptured, nude and triumphant, embracing with marble arms a mysterious stag, enamoured like Leda's swan; Diane de Poictiers, the wondrous woman of eternal youth, the elderly Alcina, who, to charm a youthful Roger, has discovered the fountain of youth; Diane de Poictiers, whom Primaticcio's frescoes at Fontainebleau sometimes represent as the luminous Queen of Night, and sometimes as a sombre Hecate surrounded by eternal fires."[1] Henry's accession to the throne gave opportunity to Diane to show all her power over him; and this in a manner which in no other age or country would have been possible. Though she was forty-eight and Henry only twenty-nine, his infatuation for her was such that he entirely resigned to her both himself and his kingdom; a surrender so complete that his contemporaries credited Diane with the possession of an enchanted ring or some other magic power.

"We are not in a natural world. This is an enchantment; and it can only be carried out by violent spells and dramatic strokes. The Armida of fifty years, who holds a king of thirty in bonds, must daily use her magic wand."[2]

[1] *Women of the Valois Court*, by Imbert de Saint-Amand.
[2] *Guerres de religion*, by Michelet.

Henry exalted fidelity to her into a virtue; all his leisure hours were spent with her; and at her estate at Anet, "In thickets of myrtle and roses, amidst statues, fountains, and gushing springs, in the depths of dark and game-abounding forests, the King leads an enchanted existence."

Catherine had none of those attractions which her rival so potently possessed. Her charms were those of intellect only; and though these had been strong enough to greatly please her husband's capable father, Francis I., they had no power to attract the duller nature of Henry. Thus there now began for Catherine a twelve years' torment, self-repression being her hourly task. Diane de Poictiers, created by Henry Duchess of Valentinois, practically ruled all things. At Henry's coronation she occupied the chief place; even the special taxes levied on the accession of a new king were bestowed upon her; she disposed of all offices, both secular and ecclesiastical; she absorbed lands and wealth in every direction; while Catherine was left to live at the gloomy castle of Chaumont,[1] Diane's splendid residences of Anet and Chenonceaux were made by her almost regal in magnificence; the Guises (the six sons of Claude, Duke of Guise),[2] at this time her faithful vassals, were promoted to all the chief offices in the kingdom; and no meeting of

[1] At Chaumont may still be seen her bedroom, with her bed, toilet table, and *prie dieu*, with on the latter her "Book of the Hours." In this book are prayers for various persons, each with a miniature of the person prayed for, and prayers to God to "have mercy on this country over which Thou hast permitted me to rule, and deal not punishment upon it on account of wrongdoings of mine."

[2] Francis, the eldest son, succeeded his father as Duke of Guise. His brother Charles became Cardinal of Lorraine. The third son, Claude, Duke of Mayenne, was married to Diane de Poictiers' daughter

his council was attended by Henry until he had first discussed with Diane the matters to be brought before it.

While such was the position with regard to Henry and Diane, Catherine the Queen had to lead a retired, self-contained existence, making herself as little obtrusive as possible, careful over every word and look lest she should give opportunity to those who watched for grounds on which she might be accused of some crime and got rid of. She had to see her ability shrouded and given no opportunity for exercise, her rightful position usurped by a woman twenty years older than herself, and far less talented, her birth and family scorned and ridiculed,[1] her advice never sought by her husband, and herself despised and insulted by a court and people who took their cue from him. Moreover, Diane de Poictiers "delighted in devising constant slights and veiled insults[2] against the 'Italian woman.'" While perhaps more galling still was her insisting, when Catherine's children were born, in installing herself as head nurse, and as M. Georges Guiffrey says,[3] "Monopolising the cradles, and settling all questions regarding the newly born," taking entire

[1] Diane de Poictiers taught the little Mary, Queen of Scots, to call Catherine behind her back, "La fille de marchands," and was never tired of making joking allusions to this topic. It was at this period that to please Diane the wits of Paris invented the fable that the Medici were originally doctors (or rather apothecaries), and that their family arms, the six balls, represented the pills they made; an ill-natured joke which has had a longer life than it deserved.

[2] There were a few who pitied Catherine and were indignant at the treatment she received. On one occasion Maréchal Tavannes, incensed at the insults so constantly shown her, made an offer to Catherine to cut off the nose of the Duchess of Valentinois, which would, he said, put an end to all Catherine's troubles on this score.

[3] *Lettres de Diane de Poictiers,* edited by M. Georges Guiffrey.

management of everything, nursing Catherine, receiving letters from the court physicians complimenting her upon her care over the Queen, and from Henry a salary "on account of the good, praiseworthy, and agreeable services she hath rendered to our dear and much loved companion, the Queen." And yet when Catherine's son Charles was born (1550), Henry left the Queen three days after his son's birth, and went to stay at Anet with Diane, an act which even in those days was considered an unexampled breach of royal etiquette.

The above shows us a state of things such as could have occurred only in France, and at that period. At first sight we are inclined to wonder how Catherine could have endured all this. But that which caused its chief bitterness was at the same time that which enabled her to endure it, viz., that through it all she had a strong passion of love for her husband. It was this which caused Catherine to endure all these things without showing a sign. Strange as this fact may seem, we have it vouched for by two unimpeachable witnesses, viz., by those observant onlookers, the Venetian ambassadors, and by her own letters years afterwards. The ambassador, Contarini, writes:—

"At the opening of the reign the Queen could not endure this love of the King for the Duchess; but later, *by reason of the urgent prayers of the King*, she resigned herself, and now she bears it with patience."

It was because Catherine loved Henry so strongly, and knew that the only way by which she could retain even such small portion of his regard as she

possessed, was to endure uncomplainingly all that such a position entailed, that she patiently, and without ever once reproaching him, bore for twelve years a combination of exasperating mortifications such as would have driven most women into furious resentment. In the latter case the court would have been turned into the same state of disgraceful turmoil as resulted when, about sixty years later, the same conditions caused Marie de' Medici to resent the conduct of her husband, Henry IV.[1] The behaviour of a weak character when placed in such circumstances is exemplified by Marie, that of a strong one by Catherine; and severe though the trial was, the latter reaped her reward, not only in the respect which she earned from many for the manner in which she bore it, as well as the satisfaction to herself in preserving the court from scenes similar to those afterwards witnessed in Marie's case, but also in retaining a certain portion of her husband's regard.[2] And there is considerable dignity in the way in which, years afterwards, she makes, in writing to her eldest daughter Elizabeth, then Queen of Spain, the only direct mention of this trial which she ever permitted to pass her lips; as well as in the terms in which on another occasion she wrote to reprove her son-in-law, Henry of Navarre, for his infidelities to his wife. At the time when the Regency of the kingdom had just devolved upon her, and when she was oppressed by many heavy cares, she writes to her daughter Elizabeth, about two years after the latter's marriage, as follows:—

"*M'amie*, commend yourself very much to

[1] *See* chap. xxvi. pp. 351-352. [2] Page 49.

God; for you have seen me in former days as contented as you are now, and believing that I should never have any trouble but this one that I was not loved in the way I wished by the King, your father, who doubtless honoured me beyond my deserts; but I loved him so much that I was always afraid of offending him, as you know well enough. And now God has taken him from me. . . . Therefore think of me, and let me serve as a warning to you not to trust too much in the love of your husband."[1]

Writing towards the end of her life to Henry of Navarre, she says:—

"My son, I was never in my life so dumbfounded as when I heard the words which Frontenac has been reporting everywhere as being those which you ordered him to convey to your wife. . . . You are not, I know, the first husband who is young and not too wise in such matters, but I believe that you are the first, and the only one, who after such events would venture on such language to his wife. I had the honour of marrying the King, my lord and your sovereign, whose daughter you have married, but the thing which vexed him most in the world was after he found out that I knew about such doings."[2]

These letters shed a flood of light on Catherine's character; but apart from this, the two allusions to Henry II. which they contain show very plainly why it was that Catherine deliberately endured in silence for twelve years the heavy trial which has been mentioned, and at the same time how deeply

[1] *Lettres de Catherine de Medicis*, edited by Count Hector de la Ferrière and G. Baguenault de Puchesse (1903).
[2] *Idem.*

she felt it, since the memory of it remained with her so many years afterwards.

But Diane de Poictiers did not confine herself to affronts in connection with private matters. From 1552 to 1558 France was at war both in Germany and Italy, and when Henry proceeded on the German campaign Diane contrived a severe public indignity to Catherine by persuading him not to give the Regency during his absence to the Queen, though this course had always been usual in such cases. The insult was the more severe in that Catherine was by far the most capable person at the court; that she felt it severely we know both from her letters and her speech on the occasion; while it did her the greatest harm with the people, lowering her greatly in their estimation and increasing their long-standing contempt for her. Nevertheless when, on Henry's departure to the war, the order communicating this decision was read to her, we are informed by a letter from a friend at the court to the Constable Montmorency that she "only smiled, and said that though it had pleased the King not to give her this authority which His Majesty Francis I. gave on a similar occasion to his mother, Louise, and though she would have used it well had he done so, yet it was not her intention to ask him to redress the wrong. Only, she said, she would prefer not to have the order published, 'lest it should lower her reputation with the people.'" No wonder that those who heard her words and saw her receive such an affront in

such a manner, marvelled openly at her "wonderful self-control."

Such, then, was the trial which lasted through so large a portion of Catherine's life. And it was this severe ordeal (involving through so many years a daily and almost hourly exercise of self-control) which both tested, and formed, her character. She was only twenty when this trial began, and had shown by her history as a girl that she possessed her full share of that tendency to emotion natural to one of Italian blood; thus for her to learn self-control was more difficult than for women of northern race, like Elizabeth of England or Jeanne d'Albret of France. Nevertheless, through the long discipline of twenty years, she grew from an emotional girl into a woman in whom the power of self-control was so developed that it amazed all who saw it in exercise. Those who looked merely on the surface saw only "indifference," or in some cases duplicity; while it is, of course, possible to argue that all self-control is duplicity. But to those who saw deeper (as it is plain from their reports that some of the Venetian ambassadors did) the real character was evident enough. And the combination of the endurance displayed, the motive for which the trial was submitted to, and the dignified manner in which the burden was borne, irresistibly impress us.

It is necessary to notice, in view of the traditional idea regarding her, that during the whole of this portion of her life, *i.e.*, *up to the age of forty*, there are no tales of crimes alleged against Catherine de' Medici. Ground for such a charge was the very thing for which her numerous

enemies watched in order to get her divorced; but they never were able to produce any. All the charges of that kind[1] relate to the period of her life after she was forty.

At last, in August 1557, when Catherine was thirty-eight, she had her first opportunity of showing her abilities. During the absence of the King in Champagne the main French army under the Constable Montmorency was totally defeated at the battle of St Quentin by Emmanuel Philibert, who in 1553 had succeeded his father as Duke of Savoy. Montmorency himself was taken prisoner; northern France was left completely defenceless; Spain was jubilant at this crushing defeat of the French arms; and a general panic took place in Paris. In this time of national emergency it was not Diane de Poictiers (though her ascendency over all affairs of the kingdom was still continuing) who came to the front, but Catherine, Diane being as helpless in the crisis as every one else. The disaster was stupendous.

"History has related what were our losses; immense, unheard of since Pavia. . . . The first shock of the news was overwhelming; France was stunned by the blow. Already Paris believed the enemy within the walls, and the realm captured. In the capital the citizens packed their possessions and fled, some to Orleans, some to Bourges, some still further. . . . To stop the flight, to rouse energy, to sound in the ears of France those words able to arouse the dead, 'The country in danger,' this was the imperative duty of whoever governed. But the King was absent;

[1] Except, of course, the accusation made against her when the Dauphin died (p. 32).

only the Queen was in Paris. What did the Queen? I leave the Venetian ambassador to reply."[1]

Giacomo Soranzo, the Venetian ambassador at that time, in his report of the 14th August 1557, relates that Catherine at once went to the *Parlement*,[2] urged on them not to lose heart (as they were ready to do), but to vigorously prosecute the war, and to vote large subsidies for the defence of the kingdom; and she showed so much courage, wisdom, and ability, that she was not only completely successful, but received an immense ovation from the members of the *Parlement*.

"She expressed herself with so much eloquence and feeling that she touched all hearts. . . . And the assembly concluded amidst such applause for Her Majesty, and such lively marks of satisfaction at her conduct, as cannot be described in words. All over the city nothing is talked about but the Queen's prudence, and the happy way in which she acted in this undertaking."[3]

Thus did Catherine, on the first occasion in which she had an opportunity of showing her powers, overcome (for a time, at all events) the prejudice which the French people had nourished against her for so many years.

"Her action gave all the more surprise because it was so little expected. Catherine de' Medici by this act raised the veil of unconcern with politics to which the force of circumstances had until now condemned her. . . . It was the first hour of her initiative, the first evidence of that personality

[1] *La Diplomatie Vénitienne*, by M. Armand Baschet.

[2] The French *Parlement* must not be confounded with the English *Parliament*, from which it differed both in constitution and functions.

[3] Venetian State Papers: *Secret Records*. Despatches of the ambassador, Giacomo Soranzo.

which she was later on to raise to so high a degree. . . . She revealed herself as Queen, and gave evidence to the Parisians that the blood of the nation had become her own blood."[1]

Nor was it only in the French people that Catherine, by the qualities which she showed in this her first public action, produced a change of opinion regarding herself; Henry was greatly impressed with her conduct on this occasion, and after the episode entirely changed his mode of behaviour towards her, henceforth during the remaining two years of his life treating her on all occasions with marked respect.

During the twelve years of her life as Queen, Catherine, shut out from State affairs, found her main occupation in the education of her children. This she undertook almost entirely herself, and the manner in which she performed it was considered by those around her to show a laudable example of devoted attention and good sense. Her sons (who all inherited, in a more pronounced degree, their father's want of ability) soon passed under other instructors,[2] but her three daughters, Elizabeth (born 1545), Claude (born 1547), and Marguerite (born 1553), were taught entirely by Catherine herself. With her three young

[1] *La Diplomatie Vénitienne*, by M. Armand Baschet.

[2] Dumas in his novels (which, of course, contain nothing belonging to history but their framework and local colouring) represents Catherine as bringing up her sons to be vicious and incapable in order that the real power might be hers; but this has no historical foundation. Catherine had no idea that her husband would die while her sons were young enough for such a plan to be of any use; while Francis, the most incapable of them, was brought up under tutors appointed by Henry II., who would certainly never have permitted anything of the kind. And similar instructors had charge of Catherine's other sons, the second, Charles, having as the superintendent of his education the Prince de la Roche sur Yonne, who appointed Amyot as the boy's tutor.

daughters Catherine also brought up Mary, Queen of Scots, who, born in 1542 and brought to France at the age of five, was the eldest of the four girls. The list of the various translations, essays, and exercises set them by Catherine is still to be seen, and shows how thorough was her teaching and how wide its range. To the little Mary she dictates the following to be translated by her into Latin:—

"The true grandeur and excellence of a prince, my very dear sister, does not consist in honours, in gold, in purple, and other luxuries of fortune, but in prudence, wisdom, and knowledge. And by so much as the prince wishes to differ from his people in his mode and fashion of living, by so much should he be removed from the foolish opinions of the vulgar. Adieu, and love me as much as you can."[1]

It is strange to remember that at the very time that Catherine was teaching Mary these principles, Diane de Poictiers was taking every opportunity to teach the latter to despise her as "La fille de marchands."

Catherine's daughters were brought up with exceeding strictness, Catherine being all her life a very great stickler for *les convenances*. It is extraordinary to note from their letters how greatly her children admired her, and how much they thought of it when they won her praise. This was not confined to one, but is common to them all. Her favourite daughter was the eldest, Elizabeth; the youngest Marguerite (she who afterwards proved such a thorn to her husband),

[1] *Histoire d'Elizabeth de Valois*, by the Marquis du Prat.

was the most troublesome even at that age, and in her letters she tells us so, and that at times she had even to be beaten. But she admired her mother just as much as did the rest.

The last year of Henry II.'s reign was a time of important marriages, and festivities, pageants, and *fêtes* in connection therewith such as Henry loved. On the 24th April 1558, Catherine's eldest son Francis was married to Mary, Queen of Scots, both of them being fifteen years of age. This wedding was arranged on the grandest scale, with every accessory that could add picturesque effect. A gallery hung with vine branches laden with grapes was constructed from the Bishop's palace to the door of the cathedral of Notre Dame, in front of which was placed the royal dais; and as the brilliant *cortège* approached the dais, heralds flung gold and silver among the crowd, until they had to desist owing to the scramble for it creating so great a disturbance. The young bride, "dressed all in white and looking like a lily, and wearing a crown blazing with diamonds, sapphires, and emeralds," took her place under the portico, where the marriage ceremony was performed by the Archbishop of Rouen, the wedding ring being handed to him by the King, who drew it from his own finger. After which Mass was celebrated inside the cathedral, the bride and bridegroom occupying a throne under a canopy of cloth of gold. In the evening there was a ball at the palace of Les Tournelles, combined with "masques and mummeries" in the Palais de Justice, at which the children of the Dukes of Guise and

Aumale rode on artificial horses caparisoned with gold and silver trappings and drawing coaches filled with gorgeously dressed pilgrims. These were followed by six ships covered with crimson velvet, and imitating as they moved the rolling motion of the sea, in the foremost of which embarked the King and the young bride, in the next the Dauphin and Catherine, in the third the Duke of Lorraine and the Princess Claude, and so on, the ships then sailing round the great hall, "which was illuminated as much by the blaze of jewels worn by the company as by the torches and cressets."[1]

This was followed a year later by the two marriages, in June 1559, of Henry's sister Marguerite to Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, and of his and Catherine's eldest daughter Elizabeth, then fourteen, to Philip II. of Spain,[2] this latter marriage being by proxy. The pageants and *fêtes* in connection with these two marriages went on for many days, and concluded with a grand tournament held in front of the palace of Les Tournelles on the 30th June, in which the King himself took part, and which was witnessed by "four Queens" — Catherine, her daughter Elizabeth, Mary, Queen of Scots, and Marguerite. Catherine's celebrated astrologer, Gaurico, had some time before predicted that Henry would be fatally wounded in a duel at the age of forty, and had repeated this prediction a week before the tournament; and Catherine had grave fears about Henry's taking part in the contest, and

[1] *Archives de l'Histoire de France*, and *Recueil de fragments historiques sur les derniers Valois*, by M. Armand Eudel.

[2] Then a widower through the death in 1558 of Mary of England.

endeavoured to dissuade him from doing so; but he was bent upon it. As he rode into the lists a boy in the crowd cried out: "Sire, do not tilt"; but no one paid any attention to it, nor did the boy himself, when afterwards interrogated, know why he had been moved to cry out. After several courses in which Henry was victorious he sent Catherine a message that he "would try one more bout for love of her." He did so; his opponent Montgomery's[1] lance pierced Henry's eye; and, to the horror of the whole assemblage, the King fell from his horse mortally wounded. He was at once carried into the Tournelles palace, lingered for ten days in great agony, and then died.

On this terrible conclusion to the tournament the greatest confusion pervaded the court, while, as soon as it was known that the King was in a dying state, all public affairs were thrown into the utmost disorder. In this emergency the Queen came forward as alone having the right to assume the management of affairs. And her first exercise of authority was to order the Duchess of Valentinois to depart to her own house. But Catherine never at any time during her life showed a revengeful spirit, and upon Henry's death she allowed Diane de Poictiers to retain possession of her magnificent château of Anet, contenting herself with forbidding her the court, and requiring Diane to resign her other château of Chenonceaux[2] in exchange for that castle of Chaumont which Catherine never desired to see again.

[1] Montgomery was Captain of the King's Scottish Guard. They numbered a hundred men, all of them gentlemen.

[2] To which Catherine had a prior claim (*see* chap. xx. p. 78).

Catherine's grief at Henry's death was immense. For several days she would not speak, and when the Venetian ambassador came to condole with her, he says that she received him in a room of which both walls and floor were all covered with black, as well as everything in the room, while she herself could scarcely speak to him. From this time forth she always wore heavy mourning and a widow's veil, and adopted a new motto, *Lachrymae hinc, hinc dolor.* Nor was this grief simulated; all writers have considered that in these various signs of grief there was no pretence. She who for so many years had so hidden her feelings that many declared her to have none, could not hide them now; she had lost the one love of her life, a blow felt all the more because the man whom she thus mourned had never known how much she loved him, nor returned her affection; and for a time she shut herself up with her grief in an impenetrable silence.

Thus ended Catherine's married life at the age of forty. We have now to see her in a new *rôle*, one in which the powers and abilities which had so long been allowed no exercise were at last to have full scope.

## CHAPTER XX

### CATHERINE DE' MEDICI

*Born* 1519. (*Married* 1533.) *Died* 1589.

(2) THE LAST THIRTY YEARS OF HER LIFE

THE period on which we now enter is a strange one, full of the most violent contrasts. The latter half of the sixteenth century in France is a time when all the elements of tragic drama are at their height. Only the music of a Wagner could do it justice. Rivers of blood flow. Lives are thrown away for a bagatelle. "Balls alternate with massacres." At one moment thunder, lightning, and dark clouds; at the next a blue sky, the soft sound of music, and sunshine amidst gardens of roses. Stilettos ornamented with pearls. French gaiety and wit even in the midst of terror and death. One thing only stable, a universal courage. Such are the characteristics of an epoch in which two streams, the barbarism of the Middle Ages and the refinement of more modern times, met in a conflict of tossing waves before the former was finally overcome by the latter.

The women of this period are peculiar to their time, differing entirely from those of any other century; and properly to appreciate any one of them we have to realise the exceptional

atmosphere in which they lived, and of which they formed so prominent a part. Fearless, capable, learned, vivacious, full of energy and common-sense, half Pagan and half Christian, deeply religious at one moment and at another consulting astrologers and purchasing love potions, riding like Amazons, fond of danger and dressing, music and love, assisting at tournaments, accustomed to bloody sights and cruel sufferings at a period when all held their lives by a very slender thread, a mixture of laughter and tears and Stoicism, they are full of contrasts and surprises, while yet at all times intensely human and intensely interesting.

And where such women found themselves placed in positions in which, in an age of fierce conflict and violent passions, they were called upon to govern states, they perforce developed the qualities necessary to such conditions. Thus of Jeanne d'Albret, niece of Francis I., and mother of Henry of Navarre, it has been said that she was "a Queen in whom nothing was woman but her sex, a soul wholly given to manly things, a mind capable of great affairs, a heart invincible by adversities";[1] and the same might have been said of either Catherine de' Medici or Elizabeth of England. All three of them were like women of iron; and had need to be so. It was an age in which, in addition to the greatest ability, the qualities required, in order to obtain for those over whom they ruled the one blessing which is the greatest of all to a country—the blessing of peace,—were a will of adamant, a rigid impassibility, a

[1] *Histoire Universelle*, by I. A. d'Aubigné.

steadfastness unconquerable. And it is to misunderstand the whole epoch to condemn them for not possessing those qualities which we admire in women rulers in our age, and for possessing those sterner characteristics which were the need of their time if they were to preserve those over whom they were set from the most grievous evils. Such a character, for instance, as that of our deservedly honoured Queen Victoria would in that age have been simply crushed, and would have been of no use to poor passion-tossed France. In stormy weather ships' anchors must be made of iron, not of gold.

And in coming to this third period of Catherine's life we reach a stormy time indeed. M. Imbert de Saint-Amand, referring to the dangers which lay before her on coming to power, says :—

"Never had a more overwhelming burden rested on a woman's shoulders. A Blanche of Castile's force of soul would not have been great enough to struggle against the tempests about to be let loose on France."[1]

The period of Catherine's life which now begins—the thirty years from 1559 to 1589—is that of the reigns of her three sons, who in turn succeeded each other. Her eldest son, Francis II., coming to the throne at sixteen, only reigned for a year and a half (1559-1560). Her second son, Charles IX., succeeded his brother at the age of ten, and reigned for fourteen years (1560-1574). Her third son, Henry III., succeeding his brother at the age of twenty-three, reigned for fifteen years (1574-1589). During the seventeen months of her

[1] *Women of the Valois Court*, by Imbert de Saint-Amand

eldest son's reign, Catherine had little more power than before her husband's death, Francis II. being entirely ruled by her opponents, the Guises; but during nearly the whole of her second son's reign Catherine was Queen Regent of France, while during her third son's reign she was, though not Regent, the most important of his advisers, striving to keep his indolent and foolish character from bringing his throne to disaster. Thus during nearly thirty years she was the most important person in France. Before coming to the detailed history of those years it will be well to glance at the task by which she was confronted, the qualities she possessed for coping with it, and the general characteristics of this the most important of the three periods of her life. And although during the first seventeen months of this period she did not obtain the control of affairs, yet this space of time being so short we may disregard it for the moment and look at these thirty years as a whole.

First, then, as to the evidence on which we have to rely. Controversy has raged for three centuries over the events of this period; with the result that the evidence by which we have to judge of Catherine's character and conduct during this portion of her life is to the last degree conflicting. By some she is represented as without ability, discernment, or breadth of view, full of vacillations and shifty compromises, acting as the moment prompted, one whose only motive was a lust for sovereignty, an intriguer working out the tangled schemes of a changeable and baleful policy, and caught in her own snares. According to others

she was endowed with an ability and power of discernment seldom seen upon a throne, one who brought to the cause of a distracted country a power of endurance in adhering to a wise but difficult course, an intelligence, and a strength of character worthy of the highest praise. Thus she is by some represented as the ruin, and by others as the salvation, of France.

But while writers of the former class are steadily tending to become less credited as fuller information becomes available,[1] they also frequently refute each other. Thus, those who have held her responsible for the massacre on St Bartholomew's Day are contradicted by so great an authority as the historian Michelet, who in his antipathy to "the Italian woman" will not allow to her ability or importance of any kind, treating her with cold disdain, calling her a "nonentity," and saying:—"Never had she either the idea or the courage required (for such a massacre). . . . Her admirer Tavannes overrates her, I consider, and exaggerates in attributing to her the idea of Coligny's death."[2] To this a later writer, M. Armand Baschet, nourishing an almost equally strong feeling against Catherine, vigorously responds:—"Desiring to be more than true, you are worse than false. . . . To listen to you, one would think Catherine de' Medici knew not even the first word about politics;" pointing out that in thus acquitting Catherine of having caused Coligny's death, Michelet destroys his own argument, by acquitting her of that which

[1] Chap. xix. pp. 4-5.
[2] *Guerres de religion*, by Michelet.

is the chief charge against her.[1] Honoré de Balzac, on the other hand, while he praises her living chastely in the midst of the most licentious court in Europe, considers that the enormous crimes and destruction which were being committed throughout France by the Protestants justified even such a massacre as that of St Bartholomew's Day; thus exonerating Catherine on grounds which admit all that her worst enemies have said. A fourth authority, Brantôme (who lived in the midst of all these events), remarks:—"She has been strongly accused of the Paris massacre. . . . There were at least three or four others who might be more justly accused of it than she"; while he is never tired of praising her goodness, her wisdom, her peace-making endeavours, and "her grief at seeing so many nobles and people perish" in these bitter contests which were rending France. Lastly, a recent writer of her life, after admitting her freedom from prejudice, her tolerance, patience, and self-control, and that she gave no cause for scandal, asserts that none of these qualities in her were deserving of any praise, but were all due to bad motives, adding:—"We shall follow her in these pages with admiration, but with hatred."[2]

The above afford an example of the conflicting opinions on the subject of Catherine's conduct during these thirty years. As before, however, our safest guides will be those dispassionate onlookers, the Venetian ambassadors, who one after another were accredited to the court of France. Their secret reports to their own government,

[1] *La Diplomatie Vénitienne*, by M. Armand Baschet.
[2] *See* Miss Sichel's *Catherine de' Medici*, pp. 6-7

those actions of hers which are admitted by all, and lastly her own letters, will together form a more reliable guide to the truth regarding Catherine de' Medici than the writings of any other authorities that could be produced.

Catherine[1] was now, at the age of forty, at the full maturity of her mental powers, and with an ample sphere for their exercise at last opening before her. The long years of obscurity and repression had disciplined and matured her character, her abilities were at their zenith, and her knowledge and experience had been ripened by her having stood as an onlooker, watching the movements of the political world of France during twenty-six years with the discernment which she so abundantly possessed. There is ample proof in her letters that she intended to undo the harm which incapacity during the previous twelve years had produced, to pacify the passions which had been aroused by unjust and short-sighted methods of government, to bring the country to peace, advance its prosperity, and raise it high in the estimation of other countries. The crest and motto which she had adopted at her marriage was a rainbow with the words, "I bring light and serenity"; and it is admitted on all hands

[1] Plate XLI. This portrait of Catherine by the second-rate artist Pourbus, taken when she was about forty, was evidently never considered by her family of any value as compared with her earlier one which hangs in the villa of Poggio a Caiano (Plate XXXIX.). Instead of being placed like the latter in an honoured position in the chief villa of the family, it was (and still is) relegated to a dark passage with all those pictures which were considered of least account. Not a little remarkable is her pink satin dress, covered all over with rows of pearls and sapphires crossing and re-crossing, while a long chain of the same from the waist supports an ornament of pearls and sapphires worn near her feet.

that on coming to power she strove earnestly to carry out this motto.

But unfortunately for Catherine a widespread movement was sweeping over Europe which made all such achievements for the time impossible. The great conflict over religion which had so long been tearing Germany to pieces was now spreading to France; Geneva and Rome[1] were beginning to make that country their battle-ground.[2] Already during the latter part of Henry II.'s reign (under the influence of Diane de Poictiers, an ardent opponent of the new religion) there had been cruel persecutions and executions on account of religion. By the time that Catherine became Queen Regent the two hostile forces had become ranged against each other; and soon a religious war — that most vindictive of all wars — raged over France, tearing the country to pieces, devastating its cities, maddening its people, and making permanent peace unattainable even by the wisest administrator until such time as the force of religious animosity had spent itself by the sacrifice of a hecatomb of noble lives. Throughout the whole period covered by the reigns of Catherine's second and third sons did this contest last, and for five

[1] For general list of Popes in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, *see* Appendix X.

[2] Though the Reformation did not in France so soon develop into a conflict, its doctrines had been promulgated there as early as they were in Germany. Jacques Lefévre, of Etaples in Picardy (who had been a scholar of the Renaissance in Italy), even forestalled Luther, publishing in 1512 a commentary on St Paul's Epistles in which he enunciated two of the main doctrines afterwards put forward by Luther. It was Picardy also which produced Calvin (born 1509), who, establishing himself at Geneva, made that city the headquarters of French Protestantism, from whence he issued his orders to the Protestants in France as autocratically as did the Pope from Rome to the Roman Catholics.

CATHERINE DE' MEDICI AT THE AGE OF FORTY.

By Pourbus.

*Alinari* *Uffizi Gallery.*

years beyond it. Thus it was her ill fate to have to rule France during just that period which the effects of the Reformation would have caused to be the most tempestuous time in that country's history whoever had been on the throne.

However, when Catherine began her task these things were hidden in the future; and the manner in which she endeavoured to cope with it has won praise from numberless high authorities. The difficulties were immense. France was torn by a furious conflict between the Protestants (called in France, the Huguenots) and the Roman Catholics, who plotted and warred ceaselessly against each other, while each endeavoured to get the throne on their side—even by force, if in no other way.[1] In this state of things Catherine's determined policy was to refuse to take either side, and to endeavour to create peace between these implacable foes by compelling them to learn mutual toleration and by holding an equal balance between them. When about eighty years later the same sort of struggle took place in England the King took a side, with results which were disastrous to both throne and country. It was just this which Catherine foresaw, and struggled all the years of her power to avoid; and she shows considerable statesmanship in having set this endeavour before her. Catherine (more successful than Charles I.) saved her son's throne, and again and again wrought peace between the two parties by her policy; but she did so at the price, which was

[1] There were again and again attempts to seize the person of the King, and keep him a prisoner, in order that the party which had possession of him might be able to use the weight of his authority against their opponents, and show the throne as on their side.

inevitable, that both parties in turn abused her as double-minded. Every concession, or even bare measure of justice, to one side was immediately seized upon by the other as an offence, and asserted to be a departure from some previous concession to themselves, and to show dissimulation on her part. Nevertheless Catherine steadfastly maintained her course, though opposed by every sort of difficulty. She had the wisdom to choose as her Chancellor and chief adviser the enlightened and temperate Protestant, Michel de l'Hôpital, and with his assistance she was enabled to steer the course she had elected to follow with at times considerable success; though under the conditions in which France then was no peace brought about could be lasting.

That she was not understood goes without saying; the course she was trying to carry out was many years in advance of her time; she was endeavouring to act as a constitutional sovereign would in these days, and to follow a policy of equal toleration to all which did not come into fashion among the nations of Europe until some two hundred years afterwards. Catherine exhausted every method of reconciliation; she passed measures favouring one side as much as the other; she gave appointments to Protestants as well as to Roman Catholics; she made mortal enemies like the Duke of Guise and the Prince of Condé embrace each other; she had as many Protestant ladies-in-waiting as she had Roman Catholic; whereas in 1555 there had been only one Protestant church in France, six years later there were two thousand. But when a country is in the state in which France

was moderate courses are out of favour; the people at such times consider those who act thus to be "lukewarm"; and France was too wild with religious hatred (the fires of which were steadily fanned from Geneva and Rome) to be able to appreciate a tolerant course of action. How little able the age was to understand or value a policy of toleration we may see both from the reports of the (unbiassed) Venetian ambassadors and from those of the (strongly biassed) Spanish ambassador, Chantonnay. The Venetian ambassador, Suriano, writes:—

"It is well known that several of the women who are most intimate with the Queen are suspected of heresy and bad conduct; and everybody is aware that the Chancellor in whom she trusts is an enemy of the Roman Church and of the Pope. We saw, too, how lukewarm were her efforts to protect the Catholic party."

While the Spanish ambassador, Chantonnay, writes to his master, Philip II.:—

"Take into consideration that whatever is lawful at Geneva as to sermons, administration of the sacraments, and similar things, may be done with impunity throughout the kingdom, beginning in the King's house."

To this policy Catherine adhered in spite of obstacles which to most would have appeared insurmountable, even sustaining war from Spain rather than abandon it. And it is very significant in connection with the degree of responsibility to be attached to her on account of the massacre on St Bartholomew's Day in 1572, to find that

during the whole of the previous twelve years it was for her *moderation and tolerance* that she was abused by the French, not for conduct of the opposite kind, and that it was contemptuously said of her that she "had the olive branch always in her hand."

Nor do Catherine's own letters (reticent as they are about herself) fail to give corroborative testimony as to what was her endeavour and what her difficulties. Writing after her son Francis II.'s death to her ambassador in Spain, she says that her endeavour as Queen Regent will be "to rehabilitate by degrees all that the malice of the times[1] has destroyed in this kingdom." While to her daughter Elizabeth she writes that God has taken her brother, "and has left me with three little children and a kingdom so divided that there is not a single person in whom I can wholly trust, and who is not swayed by party passion."[2]

There is no doubt that Catherine possessed all the qualities for a just and wise government of France if only the religious strife could have been put down, or had never arisen; and we have numerous instances given us of the many improvements, even distracted as the country was, which she introduced into the administration. Like all who have greater abilities than their fellows she had a joy in ruling, "un affetto di signoreggiare" as the Venetian ambassador Cavalli calls it. It is a mistake to style this, as some have done, a lust for power; it is a quality which all possess who are fitted to rule. And so far from being

[1] A diplomatic term for "malice of the Guises."

[2] *Lettres de Catherine de Medicis*, edited by the Comte de la Ferrière.

a defect in Catherine, it would have shown a culpable want of energy if, endowed as she was with unusual abilities, she had not manifested this love of ruling.

During this third portion of her life, after she had reached the age of forty, Catherine suddenly becomes charged with the wholesale commission of crimes of murder. Regarding this all that need be said here is that the accusation specifies no particular individuals, and that as it begins simultaneously with the religious conflict it is presumable that there is some connection between the two matters. It may also be noted that it has been held by some well qualified to form an opinion on such a point, that the ignorance of the science of medicine at that time precludes the possibility of knowledge of the subtle poisons which are presupposed in all these cases, and that on that ground alone these stories should be rejected. Undoubtedly the people of that age *imagined* that they possessed subtle poisons (and were therefore ready to attribute death to such methods); just as they thoroughly believed in witchcraft and the possibility of causing the death of a person by means of a wax figure transfixed with pins; and just as they believed in incantations, horoscopes, and the various mysteries of their imaginary science of astrology. But they deceived themselves in the one case as much as in the other. Murders by poison in that age when they did occur generally show the use of a poison by no means subtle; and any such murders if committed by Catherine would have been able to be definitely specified.

In connection with this general accusation almost an entire literature has gathered round Catherine de' Medici of stories (based on no foundation, repudiated by historians, and often directly contradicted by the circumstances) of poisoned gloves, handkerchiefs, bouquets, and other things of the same kind.[1] This literature has been preferred to sober history; but it has been pointed out by Creighton[2] that such stories "gathered round many prominent characters of that day, and are a proof, not of the guilt of the person concerned, but of the low morality of the age."[3] These stories, while they gratified an appetite for sensation, assisted the endeavours of political opponents to blacken the character of "the Italian woman." Among them is the well-known fable of the secret cupboards in the suite of apartments occupied by Catherine at the château of Blois, which a later age, in search of sensation, felt sure must have been intended for keeping her poisons: a story which once passed for history, but has now been exploded as entirely apocryphal.[4]

[1] Perhaps one of the most amusing of these tales is that of *the pink candles,* which on being lighted filled the room with poisonous vapour; by which means, according to the story, Charles IX. (having on that night unexpectedly changed rooms with his brother Henry) was poisoned in mistake for Henry; a story which not long ago formed the subject of a play at a Continental theatre. Since Henry was Catherine's favourite son, the story is all the more piquant.

[2] *History of the Papacy,* by Mandell Creighton.

[3] As an example of the length to which that age could go in their credulous belief in the use of subtle poisons, we find even an historian like Jovius attributing the death of Cardinal Bibbiena in 1520 to a poison administered to him *in new laid eggs,* the hen having been made to imbibe the poison.

[4] Fresh stories of this kind are continually being invented, the race of custodians in charge of historical buildings throughout Europe having long since discovered that such stories connected with the buildings which they show to visitors have a distinct pecuniary value.

These ingeniously contrived cupboards were almost certainly intended for keeping the huge mass of secret correspondence which so prolific a letter-writer as Catherine collected round her, and the copies of those letters which now fill so many volumes of the Secret Records of various countries. There was also another use to which a portion of these cupboards may have been put. Astrology was the fashion of the day, and in connection with it a large paraphernalia of minerals, drugs, and magic substances of many kinds were considered indispensable. Catherine was an ardent votary of this cult, and these cupboards may also have been partly used for this purpose. This taste for astrology surrounded Catherine with an atmosphere of mystery which much assisted the growth round her personality of a literature of the kind mentioned.

Apart, however, from these stories, looked upon by historians in the light of fables, and showing merely the low morality of the age and the bitterness of the religious conflict, there are two murders (and only two) with which Catherine has been definitely charged, one that of Coligny, the other that of Lignerolles, an objectionable associate of her third son Henry who mysteriously disappeared, and was presumably murdered. The former of these cases may be left to be considered when we come to that point in Catherine's history, but the latter may well be mentioned here, since it shows an example of the kind of foundation upon which accusations of this nature were credited in that age and have been handed down to our own.[1]

[1] *See* also p. 129, regarding Charles IX.'s window in the Louvre.

The charge is founded on a single sentence in a contemporary diary, the anonymous writer of which, speaking of Lignerolles's disappearance, curtly states:—"The Queen Mother, with the full consent of her children, had him killed." Knowing as we do that the two parties in France at that time were ready to believe and propagate the wildest stories without any proof, and stuck at nothing in their abuse of a religious opponent, it is impossible to credit any statement of this nature (made by either party) unless it has independent corroboration from State papers or other similar sources. And a single bald statement like this certainly requires it in no ordinary degree. Yet not only is none such forthcoming, but also the statement itself contains its own refutation. For, knowing what we do of Catherine de' Medici, who is there that will believe that she was the sort of person who, intending to commit such a crime, would discuss it beforehand with those daughters (for she could not under the circumstances discuss it with her son Henry himself) about whose character and training she was so abnormally strict; still less that she would obtain from them a "full consent" to this secret murder? Yet this, preposterous as it is, is that which is involved by the statement on which alone this charge rests.

Astrology did not by any means exhaust all Catherine's scientific tastes. She was interested in all branches of science, while both mathematics and mechanics had especially great attractions for her. Another branch of knowledge in which her sound sense is very conspicuous was that of hygiene, in which she was altogether in advance

of her time. In opposition to the ideas then prevailing on the subject, she was a strong advocate for plenty of air and exercise, and in her letters to her daughters is found giving them unlimited good advice on this point. She was also much opposed to the conservatism of the day in medical matters, constantly urging the desirability of enquiring into new methods in medicine and surgery, and of taking note of new discoveries in medical science made in other countries.

Catherine was a most indefatigable letter-writer. Her letters deal with every imaginable subject, from the most important affairs of international politics down to pleadings on behalf of innumerable *portégés* for whom she desired benefits, and the most minute directions about her children's health and how their clothes were to be made; and all her letters breathe a profound commonsense. M. Armand Baschet says:—

"A just and veracious history of Catherine de' Medici would be impossible without studying her private letters. Her ability, her penetration, her astonishing facility in overcoming all difficulties, show themselves in all her expressions."[1]

And Michelet himself has said:—

"At the head of the Laubespins, the Pinarts, the Villeroys, and other French secretaries, at the head of the Gondis, the Biragues, and other Italian secretaries, must be placed that untiring female scribe, Catherine de' Medici. If there is no despatch to draw up, she makes up for it by writing letters of politeness, compliment, or condolence, even to private persons."[2]

[1] *La Diplomatie Vénitienne,* by M. Armand Baschet.
[2] *Guerres de religion,* by Michelet.

Reading of this indefatigable letter-writing, which occupied so many hours of each day of Catherine's life, we look with renewed interest at the small *cabinet vert* in her château of Chenonceaux, with her initials carved on the ceiling, which was her boudoir and writing-room, and the place in which the greater part of her mass of letters and minutes on State affairs were written. Her labours were incessant; the Venetian ambassador, Sigismondo Cavalli, says:—

"At table, or while walking, she is unceasingly conversing with some one on affairs; her mind is bent, not merely on political matters, but on so many others, that I do not know how she can endure and go through so much."

M. Battifol[1] states that she was the most extravagant of all the Queens of France; but he adds that she was the one who (owing to her immense dowry) had the richest personal property. Her chief amusement was hunting, of which she was passionately fond, not merely when young, but throughout her life. She had many accidents; on one occasion she broke her leg out hunting, and another time by a severe fall fractured her skull, necessitating the operation of trepanning; but she continued to hunt until nearly sixty years of age. After one of these accidents she writes:—"You ask for news of my fall, so I will tell you that it was a bad and heavy one; but, thank God, I was not much hurt, and am only marked on my nose, like the sheep of Berri." She was the inventress of the side saddle; and it must have required some courage to be the first to attempt

[1] *Marie de Medici and her Court*, by Louis Battifol.

to ride a horse in such an entirely new manner. Her son, Charles IX., tells us that she was always very regardless of herself, "for that she was of her nature very slow to complain," and says that she frequently neglected her own health, though so particular about that of her children. She bore pain with the endurance of a Stoic, never complaining. In her old age, when constantly tormented with attacks of rheumatism, she invariably treats the matter with a passing joke at her own infirmities. All writers refer to her unusual courage in danger. When determined to drive the English from France, she insisted, in order to inspire the troops, on taking part personally in the siege of Rouen and entering the battle; and when remonstrated with by the Constable and the Duke of Guise, "only laughed and asked why she should spare herself more than they did."[1]

Her agreeable manners when she came as a bride to France have been already alluded to; on her becoming Queen Regent this characteristic had greater scope, and we find all writers referring to it. Brantôme (always most enthusiastic when speaking of Catherine) expatiates in glowing terms on this point, saying that she was "tall and majestic and of a winning presence," and that "as Queen of France and doing the honours of the court she was most brilliant and magnificent, and nothing ever equalled her." And even Trollope says:— "Catherine the Queen was one of the most graceful mannered women of her time; grave diplomatists were fascinated by her conversation, and learned lawyers charmed by her affability."

Whether it was her fault, or her misfortune,

[1] *Dames illustres,* by Brantôme.

that she acquired a character, among later generations, for exceptional malevolence, and how far the character usually attributed to her has been a just one or the reverse, is a point regarding which the main facts of her life, as they appear in the fuller light now available, are best left to speak for themselves.

Having thus seen what were the chief features of the task before Catherine, and the qualities she possessed for coping with it, we can now glance at the principal events of these last thirty years of her life, and at how she bore herself through the stormiest period of French history.[1]

## (1559-1560)

On Henry II.'s death his eldest son, Francis II., then sixteen, succeeded to the throne. He was sickly in body, and intensely feeble in character, and it might have been thought would certainly have been under the domination of his mother. But the powerful group of brothers, the Guises, whom Diane de Poictiers had placed in the principal

[1] In narrating the history of this third period of Catherine's life the authorities chiefly relied upon have been the reports of the Venetian and other ambassadors, and Catherine's own letters (see pp. 5 and 60-61). To quote them too frequently would grievously encumber the text for the general reader. References have therefore mainly been confined to those required in denoting the source from which some extract illustrating a point has been taken, or in quoting some statement of a modern writer (such as Miss Sichel) which it was desired to refute. Beyond the authorities mentioned in the footnote to page 5 the chief authority followed has been *The Cambridge Modern History*, which is itself based upon the results of all the most recent research, and is in my opinion a much more reliable guide than, for instance, Professor Mariéjol (in *The Lavisse History of France*), who with all his learning is still in the thraldom of those contemporary French writers who, as I have shown (pp. 3, 110, and 117), are not to be depended upon. It is almost needless to say that the present book takes an exactly opposite view of the character and conduct of Catherine de' Medici to that taken by Miss Sichel in her recent book *Catherine de' Medici and the French Reformation*, with its sequel, *The Later Years of Catherine de' Medici*.

offices of the State, were by no means ready to sink into obscurity as she had been obliged to do; and chance now gave all the power into their hands. The feeble-minded youth who had become King was entirely swayed by his young wife, Mary, Queen of Scots, who was now Queen of France as well as of Scotland, and of whom Catherine in her letters at this time writes;—"Our little Scottish Queen has only to smile to turn all Frenchmen's heads." But Mary, herself also only sixteen, cared not at all about politics, and was chiefly bent on amusing herself. She was proud of her two crowns and her beauty, was surrounded by adulation and flattery, and in no mood to be occupied by such dull subjects as affairs of State policy. Therefore she was only too ready to leave the entire management of State affairs to her powerful uncles, the Guises,[1] and the latter almost at once secured complete dominion over the pitiful and contemptible youth, Francis II., using him simply as their tool, and effectually preventing Catherine from having any influence.

Moreover, the religious question helped to strengthen this state of things. Diane de Poictiers had always been the bitter enemy of the new religion, and she and the Guises were determined, now that the latter had complete power, to exercise it by a vigorous stamping out, by the most ruthless methods, of Protestantism in France. And as Catherine was considered to have leanings towards the Protestant party, and at any rate to be exceedingly lukewarm, and certain not to be at all disposed towards the stringent measures which the Guises intended to adopt, they were determined

[1] Brothers of her mother, Mary of Lorraine.

not to allow her to have any control over affairs. So that Catherine, during her eldest son's short reign of seventeen months, though outwardly occupying a more important position owing to the removal from the scene of the Duchess of Valentinois, had practically little more power than she had during her husband's lifetime; and although Francis II. began his reign by issuing a decree ordering his mother's authority to be obeyed as if it were his own, this became a dead letter (if it was ever intended to be anything else), and the Guises alone ruled France.[1] To the Duke of Guise Francis by a formal decree gave absolute authority over the whole of the military affairs of the kingdom,[2] and to his brother, Charles de Guise, Cardinal of Lorraine, similar authority over the whole of the civil affairs, while one lucrative office after another was absorbed by them and their brothers. With the entire administration of the kingdom in their hands, the ambition of this family became more unbounded than ever, and they aspired even to set aside all the princes of the blood royal.

Shortly after Henry II.'s death, Catherine, in her dejection at the loss of the husband she had loved, the incapacity of her eldest son, and the unquiet state of the kingdom, which threatened, under

[1] We see this brought out very clearly by what happened a year later, on the death of Francis II., in the case of the Prince of Condé and the King of Navarre, whose lives were only able to be saved by Catherine, because, by Francis II.'s death, the power of the Guises came to an end.

[2] Thus depriving of his office the deservedly honoured Montmorency, Constable of France, who had given long and good service to Francis's father, Henry II.

the intolerant rule of the Guises, soon to bring heavy troubles upon the throne, went off to Chaumont, before its transfer to Diane de Poictiers had been effected, to consult her astrologer Ruggieri (who had long lived there in a set of apartments in one of the towers of the castle) as to the future of herself and her sons. And then ensued that strange "Vision of the future Kings of France," of which one Nicholas Pasquier, son of a member of the States-General, tells us. How that the Queen Mother, being told by Ruggieri to gaze steadily into a large mirror which hung on the wall, when she would see the future Kings of France appear in succession, while each of them would reign as many years as his apparition in the mirror made complete turns, in trepidation did so. First, there appeared a pale and sickly youth whom she recognised as her son Francis II., who slowly made one turn and then faded from her view. Next came her son Charles, who, as Catherine breathlessly watched, made thirteen turns and passed out of sight. He was followed by her son Henry, who rapidly made fifteen turns and then suddenly vanished. Then entered on the scene Henry of Navarre, who, as Catherine (now unable to remove her gaze from this strange pageant) watched as one spellbound, made twenty turns, and likewise suddenly disappeared. Following him came a bright boy,[1] who continued turning again and again until, when he had done so thirty times, Catherine in an agony cried out that she could look no more, and fainted away. So at least runs the legend. And the next day Catherine,

[1] Louis XIII.

much shaken by what she had seen, left Chaumont, and never again saw the château where she had spent so many gloomy years, and the last visit to which had been marked by so weird an experience.

But the residence which she had taken in exchange for it was the delight of Catherine's heart, and became during the rest of her life her favourite abode. Situated on the borders of the forest of Amboise, Chenonceaux, which had originally been a mill, worked by the waters of the river Cher, had been gradually improved by successive owners until it became a charming château, which about the year 1523 was bought by Francis I. Catherine had always coveted it, from the days when Francis I. had taken her there on some of their hunting trips together. And it was another of the bitter things she had had to bear that on the latter's death her husband, Henry II., instead of allowing it to become hers, gave it to Diane de Poictiers. The latter had since enlarged and beautified it, and Catherine, now that it had at last become her own, was bent upon improving it still further. For a time, however, she was obliged to defer these plans until public affairs should become less troubled. For the condition of these now became most threatening, and it was evident that at the rate matters were proceeding the throne would ere long be in serious danger.

For the Guises were not long in embarking on the course they had determined upon as regards Protestantism. The Cardinal of Lorraine,

especially, was a most baneful character for any country to be cursed with, being a violent persecutor, loathed by the people, and bent upon rooting out Protestantism by the most drastic methods. Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, wrote of him that he "would like to set households by the ears all over France." And he certainly succeeded in doing so. Under his administration of the country the most cruel persecution of Protestants at once set in; and when after a short time Anne du Bourg, a sincere and earnestly religious man of very temperate views and high character, a "Moderate," and a leading member of the *Parlement*, was condemned and put to death by the Guises for being a Protestant, matters reached a climax. The Protestants (backed, it is said, by Elizabeth of England) laid a plot while the court was at Blois to capture and put to death the Guises, and, if possible, to seize the young King and make him a Protestant; or, if he refused, to make the Prince of Condé King. Catherine did not know what they were planning to do, but she was entirely opposed to the way in which the Protestants were being treated (as she considered that toleration was the only safe course for the kingdom) and hated the Guises, though as long as her son was ruled by his wife, and both of them by the uncles of the latter, Catherine had to stand aside and look on. But she writes:—

"When I see these poor people burnt, beaten, and tormented, not for thieving or marauding, but simply for upholding their religious opinions, when I see some of them suffer cheerfully, with a glad heart, I am forced to believe that there

is something in this which transcendeth human understanding."[1]

The Protestants, knowing of this sympathetic attitude on her part, and not knowing how small her power was, appealed to her against what was being done on the King's authority under the administrative powers which had been granted by him to the Guises, and she, unwilling to acknowledge how powerless she was, extracted a promise from the latter to stop the persecutions; but she could really effect nothing, and the persecutions continued.[2] However, after a time she succeeded in getting a decree issued by the King forbidding the persecution of Protestants; but the Guises had no intention of obeying any such decree, and practically snapped their fingers in her face. Catherine consulted Admiral Coligny as to what could be done, and he told her (what she knew already) that the Guises were "hated like the pest, and alone to blame for the disturbed state of the country"; but it was easier to say this than to discover how to oust the Guises, who had become practically kings of France. Meanwhile the Protestants were elaborating their plot, regarding which Calvin afterwards said: "Never was enterprise worse conceived, or more stupidly carried out." The English Roman Catholics were suffered to find it out, and they informed the Duke of Guise; whereupon the latter promptly

[1] *Lettres de Catherine de Medicis*, edited by the Comte de la Ferriére.

[2] The promise obtained from the Guises that the persecutions should be discontinued was communicated to the Protestants; when in spite of it the persecutions continued, they put it down to duplicity on Catherine's part.

removed the King, the Queen Mother, and the court from Blois to Amboise (which was a more secure abode), and awaited events.

At Amboise the Guises, who desired to make the matter appear as formidable as possible to the King, so that they might punish with the greater severity those implicated in it, kept the court in almost as complete confinement as though they were in a state of siege, the gates of the castle being shut, and the neighbouring roads patrolled by parties of cavalry. In March 1560 the conspirators made their attempt to capture the Guises and the King, but in such a feeble and desultory fashion that from first to last the so-called conspiracy presented no real danger to those concerned. So much so that there is even an appearance throughout the affair of the Protestants having been deliberately led on by the Guises to make the attempt in order that the latter might be able to destroy as many of them as possible. Whether this were the case or not, the attempt was made in a manner most inadequate for such an enterprise. A few of the conspirators were found by the cavalry patrols lurking in a wood near the castle; a day or two later a larger band were captured; Condé, who had secretly been head of the plot, deserted his followers with their consent, and took his place at court as though he had had no connection with the conspiracy; the rest of the conspirators, instead of thereupon abandoning the enterprise, as they would have been wise to do, foolishly advanced against the castle, though they could never have expected to take it. Their attack, feebly carried out, was easily

repulsed; in the retreat the greater number of them were taken prisoners; and the plot collapsed.

The Guises, who headed the Roman Catholic party, by causing the King to place in their hands the entire civil and military administration of the kingdom, were not only able to persecute their religious opponents with impunity, but could also declare any actions of the latter in retaliation to be acts of treason against the King. And it was exactly this making the throne take a side (carrying with it consequences of this kind), which Catherine, when a year later she came into power, refused to adopt. But the Guises, being violent partisans who were determined to root out their opponents, cared for no such considerations, and were governed by one sole aim, that of making their own party triumphant; they therefore now proceeded to punish all those whom they had captured, not as heretics, but as persons guilty of treason against the King. By this means, notwithstanding the King's decree forbidding any further executions on account of religion, they would be able nevertheless to put to death a large number of important Protestants.

From the prisoners, under torture, the Guises learnt (if they did not know it before) that there had never been any danger to the King, and that the whole plot was aimed at themselves alone; and their vengeance, inspired, not only by the desire of the triumph of their party, but also by fears for their own safety, was cruel and vindictive. Every Protestant throughout the country round upon whom their soldiers could lay hands was summarily hanged, drowned in the Loire, or

brought to the castle to be beheaded. These massacres of their opponents went on for a month; every part of the walls of the castle was disfigured by heads of the slain; and the Guises, in order to implicate the members of the court in their proceedings, forced them whenever they could to witness these executions, even the Prince of Condé being compelled by them to do so. Finally, in order to strike terror into all who might think of engaging in such plots against their power in future, as well as to assist in giving the desired appearance of a condemnation for treason against the King, the Guises arranged a public execution of the fifty-seven principal prisoners, and made it as impressive as possible. They directed that the execution (fixed for the 30th March) should be carried out in the presence of the whole court, and issued notices throughout the surrounding country, proclaiming the execution and ordering all to be present at it. In obedience to this order the people came in crowds, and occupied hill-tops, roofs of houses, and every point from which the scaffold was visible; while for the members of the court the Guises arranged seats in tiers round the open space, as if for a *fête*. When the whole court, with the young King and Queen and their attendants, the Queen Mother and her ladies, and the Princes of the Blood, including the Prince of Condé himself, had taken their places, the Duke of Guise placed himself close to the scaffold on horseback, and one by one the fifty-seven gentlemen condemned to death laid their heads on the block and were beheaded. Catherine and the whole court were

so horrified at this dreadful spectacle that they were thankful to leave Amboise on the following day for Chenonceaux, where Catherine, "to get rid of the horror of blood," arranged a series of garden *fêtes* to wipe out the effect of the terrible scenes which the Guises had created for them during the month they had passed at Amboise. Thus did Francis, Duke of Guise, and his brother Charles light the fires of civil war in France which were to rage over that country for more than a generation.

By certain writers Catherine's conduct in connection with the above episode has been described with every epithet of condemnation. One French chronicler declares that the Guises arranged these executions "as a distraction for the ladies, who were becoming bored at staying so long in one place"; others state that "Catherine and her ladies were present at the spectacle," and took pleasure in watching the tortures inflicted on the Protestants; others that these executions "were witnessed by the cold-hearted Court from a balcony as if they had been stage-representations";[1] and again, that Catherine showed her cruel temperament by finding fault with the Duchess of Guise when the latter wept copiously at "the cruel shedding of so much innocent blood"[2]—blood, by the way, which was being shed by that lady's own husband and his brothers. But the facts do not appear to bear out this

[1] *See* Miss Sichel's *Catherine de' Medici*, p. 109.

[2] It was this same Duchess of Guise, however, who twelve years later took a very different attitude, and was the chief instigator of her son Henry, Duke of Guise, to murder Coligny and execute the massacre of St Bartholomew's Day.

colour which the French Protestant writers have put on them, though it was one natural enough, perhaps, to the friends of those who were being put to death. It was not "Catherine and her ladies," but Francis II. and his court (of which they formed a part), who looked on at these executions. And it was not as an "amusement," or from a wanton pleasure in cruelty,[1] that they were there, though the arrangements made by the Guises no doubt caused it to have that appearance to those whom Francis, Duke of Guise, and his brothers thus slaughtered. So far from its being any pleasure to the court to be there, we know that both Francis II., Mary, and many of the rest were almost fainting from the dreadful spectacle, and that it was just because Catherine and all of them felt so horrified at it that she arranged for them all to quit Amboise next day and depart to Chenonceaux. The Guises (in whose hands Francis was a mere puppet) insisted on the presence of the King and his whole court at these executions with a threefold object. First, to have to watch such an execution would tend to intimidate all at the court who (like Condé) might be inclined to take part with the enemies of the house of Guise. Second, the presence of the members of the court on such an occasion would tend to embroil them with the Protestants; which was just the effect it had, causing the Protestant writers to declare that they were there as an amusement, and to inveigh against them for such heartless cruelty. Third, any member of the

[1] The highest authority has said that Catherine de' Medici "had no natural tendency to cruelty." (*The Cambridge History,* vol. iii. chap. i.)

court who refused to be present at the execution of those who had plotted against the King's authority and made an organised attack on his residence, could *ipso facto* be pointed at by the Guises as being an enemy of the King and a friend of those who had desired to make him their prisoner. It is not likely, for instance, that Condé would have been present as a spectator at the execution of those whose leader he had been, and who still honoured him,[1] if he had not been forced in this manner. Hence, neither Catherine nor any other lady of the court could be absent; and we see this exemplified in the case of Anna d'Este, Duchess of Guise, who, when she refused to go to the execution, was dragged there by the Guises by physical force; and when subsequently she said that she was sure God would have vengeance on those who took so many worthy gentlemen's lives, she endured much rough treatment and anger from her husband's brothers in consequence. And if Catherine said anything to her at all on account of her weeping (which is very doubtful), it was nothing more than a remark intended to urge her to maintain a due amount of self-control.

Moreover, Catherine did not remain passive during these proceedings of the Guises. She made a strong endeavour to save the lives of many of the prisoners, and we are told "tried everything she could, even seeking out these new kings[2] in their chambers, and caressing them"; but without avail, for the Guises were deter-

[1] Many of them saluted him before laying their heads on the block.
[2] The Guises.

mined to slay them all. It is also noteworthy (as showing that these condemnatory remarks upon Catherine in connection with this episode proceed more from bias than from any solid basis of fact) that although Mary, Queen of Scots, was likewise present at this execution, and as Queen of France occupied at least as important a position at it as the Queen Mother, while also we do not hear of her having importuned her uncles on behalf of the lives of any of these prisoners as Catherine had done, yet none have ever made similar remarks regarding Mary, Queen of Scots, in the matter.

The fact is that these ladies were all of them *women of their time*, and that to look on at an execution of this kind was not the same thing to them as it would be to any one in these days. France was becoming far too much accustomed to such cruel deeds for women to fail to grow more or less callous to such sights. We may also remember that these ladies could both look on at executions, and also bear themselves with calmness and fortitude when their own turn came to suffer in like manner. Their doing the former is no proof of cruelty on their part, as it would be in our days. And we who live in more peaceful times are in error if we impute cruelty to them owing to our judging their actions by a standard which relates to an entirely different set of conditions.

Catherine now succeeded in getting a council on the subject of the religious differences assembled at Fontainebleau; and at this council, notwithstanding the angry frowns of the Guises and

their puppet the King, she spoke boldly against the policy which was being pursued regarding the Protestants, and stated that one half the people were Protestants, and asked sarcastically "if it was supposed that the sword could be used against them all." Nevertheless matters did not mend; and throughout the summer of 1560 plots on the part of the Protestants for a general rising throughout the south of France (including the seizure of Lyons), and imprisonments and executions of prominent Protestants on the part of the Guises, continued to take place.

One artifice of the Guises did Catherine much harm in the eyes of the people of France, while it has largely affected the writings of the contemporary French historians who deal with the events of these seventeen months. So long as the puppet King was entirely under their dominion, and so long as the entire civil and military rule of the country was by his decree vested in them, the Guises knew that neither Catherine nor any one else could interfere with them. At the same time they knew how greatly they were hated by the people;[1] and to shield themselves as much as possible from the odium caused by their actions, they made the incapable youth who was their tool, in authorising their proceedings, from time to time quote also his mother's name as he had done in his original decree; thus making it appear as though their actions were done with Catherine's concurrence. And although she opposed them on every occasion at the court, she was powerless to

[1] Among other communications of a similar kind a celebrated pamphlet was sent to the Cardinal of Lorraine, entitled *A Letter to the Tiger of France*.

take any action which would right her in the eyes of the country so long as the position remained the same with regard to Francis. However, a time was rapidly approaching when she would be freed from this position, and be able to show all men what her real attitude was.

The Guises now began to fly at higher game, and planned to achieve the death both of the Prince of Condé and his brother, Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre, the two leading members of the Protestant party; and were not deterred even by the fact that they were of the blood royal, and next in succession to the throne after Catherine's sons. Condé especially was known by them to have been a party both to the plot which had ended at Amboise, and to that for the seizure of Lyons. Accordingly in September the Guises caused the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé to be summoned by the King to the court (which was then at Orleans), the King stating that he wished them to come and refute their accusers, and promising them a safe-conduct and a friendly reception. Catherine could not have known what the Guises meant to do, nor would they have dreamed of letting her know it, and she no doubt did not believe that they would dare to take the lives of princes of the blood royal; for when Navarre and his brother showed reluctance to come, she wrote begging them to do so as the King wished it so much, and that she and all the court would receive them hospitably. On their arrival at court Condé was at once seized under the orders of the Duke of Guise,

and thrown into prison as a preliminary to his execution for high treason; while for the King of Navarre, who could not be thus accused, the Guises had another plan. So far from Catherine having plotted to take the lives of Condé and the King of Navarre, as has been maintained,[1] her subsequent conduct in this affair completely disproves the assertion.[2]

The plot to which the Guises persuaded Francis to agree, and which they carefully kept concealed from Catherine, knowing that she would find means to frustrate it, was that he should summon Navarre to come to his apartment in a private manner and unattended. The only attendants on the King would be themselves and the Marshal de Saint André. Francis was to reproach Navarre with the state of the country, and then in a sudden rage to strike him with his dagger, when the other three would assail him as defenders of the King's person, and despatch him.

But Catherine heard of the plot just in time. She hastily sent the Duchess of Montpensier to warn Navarre of it, and told him not to go when an invitation came to him from the King; at the same time she herself went to her son and used all her powers to prevent him from obeying the Guises' commands in this matter. The account of what took place, and of how Catherine had saved his life, was afterwards related by Navarre to his wife, Jeanne d'Albret, who published it in a manifesto in 1568. He told his wife that in accordance with the Queen Mother's warning he disregarded the

[1] *See* Miss Sichel's *Catherine de' Medici*, p. 113.
[2] *See* below as regards Navarre, and pp. 93-94 as regards Condé.

first invitation he received from the King, but on receiving a second summons, thought it would appear cowardly to refuse, and went. As soon as he entered the room the Cardinal de Lorraine closed the door carefully behind him. The King received him, wearing his dagger, and reproached him bitterly as he had been instructed to do; but Navarre, owing to the warning he had received, replied in so humble a fashion that he gave no opportunity to the King to display any wrath, and after a time Francis allowed him to depart unharmed, to the intense rage of the Cardinal de Lorraine, who, in disgust at the failure of the plot, as he departed burst out with "Voilà le plus poltron cœur que fut jamais." Catherine was overjoyed at having been thus successful in saving Navarre's life, and herself related her part in it to his wife, Jeanne d'Albret.

But the Prince of Condé was still held fast in prison, and the Guises, who knew that he was their chief opponent, were determined that his life at all events should not be saved. Catherine had succeeded in getting his prison changed from Orleans to Amboise, but that was all she could effect; and she writes an ambiguously worded letter, saying how strong the latter place was and how impossible it would be for him to escape thence (apparently with the object of showing that the Guises need have no objection to Amboise as the place of his incarceration), concluding with, "I do not think that there is any place in all France where the Prince could be

safer or better looked after."[1] That she intended to save his life if she could is fully proved by what happened immediately afterwards; so that whatever else this letter may mean, it certainly does not mean that she intended to help the Guises to effect their purpose. Nevertheless, the latter secured Condé's condemnation to death, and got the sentence of death signed by the King, and the 10th December fixed as the date of the execution. The Guises would not suffer even Condé's wife to see him, not even when she begged to be allowed to do so once before he died "to give him courage."

Just at this juncture Francis II. fell ill; and a few days later this incapable youth breathed his last, after a reign of seventeen months. He died on 5th December 1560, his name hated throughout France owing to his surrender of himself and his kingdom to such a rule as that of the Guises.

## (1561-1574)

On Francis II.'s death Catherine's second son, Charles, a boy of ten, succeeded to the throne. Catherine was made, during his minority, Queen Regent of France. And the first act of her power was one which tells directly against the view ordinarily held of her. The death of the

[1] This letter Miss Sichel takes as evidence that Catherine was plotting Condé's death. Not only, however, does Catherine's conduct a few days later entirely disprove this, but also it is to be noted that the latter writes in exactly the same strain (using almost the identical words) about her own son, the Duc d'Alençon, when, about twelve years afterwards, she kept him temporarily a prisoner at Amboise, to keep him out of mischief, on which occasion she writes to Guise: "The place is strong and massive, and the little frog (her name for Alençon) cannot possibly get away from it."

Prince of Condé, who was marked out as the leader of the Protestant party, and whom they were already proposing to make King, must have seemed highly desirable, not only in the interests of Catherine's sons, but also in the cause of France; since the death of their leader might be expected to paralyse the Protestants, and prevent their commencing a civil war, as they were now proposing to do. Catherine, whose *affetto di signoreggiare* had at last a chance of being gratified, desired greatly that scope for showing her ability for ruling which she would have as Queen Regent on behalf of a boy of ten. On the other hand, Condé's existence seriously threatened this; he had already headed two plots in succession which had as their object to place him on the throne instead of Catherine's sons; and he had been openly spoken of by the Protestants as "Louis XIII." Condé, in his prison, was ignorant of Francis II.'s death, and supposed that he himself had but four days more to live; and Catherine had only to let the law take its course.

This, however, was not the course which Catherine adopted. We are told:—

"Guise saw that his power was at an end, knowing that during the minority of the next King the Queen Mother would be Regent. He at once went to her, and urged her with all his force, for the sake of her own and her son's safety, to allow the sentence of death which had been passed against Condé to be carried out, and also to put to death the King of Navarre."[1]

[1] *The Cambridge Modern History*, vol. iii. chap. i.

Catherine flatly refused, countermanded the execution, and ordered Condé to be set at liberty. She then sent for the King of Navarre, told him she had had no hand in the schemes to take the lives of himself and his brother, and offered him her friendship on two conditions; first, that he would forego his claim to the Regency (for which he had small desire and was not fit), and, second, that he would make peace with the Guises so that there should be an end to the strife between the two religious parties which was threatening to desolate France. These terms he accepted, and he also was set at liberty; though Catherine must have had grave doubts whether he would keep the second promise; and she would have been justified, for he very quickly broke it.

Thus did Catherine make her first essay in that long endeavour to be a peacemaker to France which was to continue through so many years. We who have followed the course of the Medici have seen at least three other occasions in which conduct similar to this was displayed by them; and as Condé's prison doors roll back we seem to hear an echo of Lorenzo's speech that "he who knows how to forgive knows how to rule."

Catherine, on becoming Queen Regent, showed at once the line she intended to adopt of endeavouring to maintain on the part of the throne that attitude of toleration towards both the religious parties which she justly considered to furnish the only hope of preserving the country from the horrors of a desperate civil war. Within a month

of her being installed in power as Queen Regent she published a royal Edict, dated 28th January 1561, stopping all persecutions in consequence of religion, releasing all who were in prison on that account, and ordering that there should be full liberty given to the Protestant religion throughout France. At the same time she wrote to the Pope demanding that Communion in both kinds should be administered to the laity, that prayers should be said in the vulgar tongue, and that certain other reforms in Church matters desired by the Protestants should be carried out. For the above Edict she was, of course, abused by the Roman Catholic party, who under the *régime* of the Guises had nourished high hopes of seeing Protestantism stamped out in France; and when a little later she similarly granted concessions for which the Roman Catholics asked, she incurred like abuse from the Protestant party; though there were a few among the latter who took a more balanced view, as, for instance, Languet, who wrote that she "sought to moderate all things." And throughout the years that followed we find her always struggling to maintain the same attitude, and incurring odium now from one side and now from the other in consequence; so that among the writings of the day the assertions as to her "duplicity" and "double-mindedness" throve apace. This endeavour to maintain (or recover) peace by holding the balance between the two parties who divided France is the key to all Catherine's conduct. She strove for it earnestly while as yet the two adversaries were only drifting towards war, and when at last they broke into

open war she again and again brought about peace by the same method; though only to find her efforts nullified by their inability to live peaceably together. And this long and strenuous effort as a peacemaker to France (notwithstanding that by no fault of hers it failed of permanent success) will ever remain Catherine's chief claim to praise.

But the dark clouds which had gathered over France were not to be dispelled by any such efforts, forcibly as Catherine made them, nor until long-continued storm had poured itself out upon that country. Throughout the whole of the remaining twenty-eight years of her life that storm raged, and during that time France saw no less than eight religious wars follow each other in succession; while the short interludes of peace were each scarcely more than a truce during which the two antagonists collected their strength for a fresh contest. And bitter indeed was this conflict. Mézeray, who wrote about fifty years after Catherine's death, says:—

"If any one were to relate all that took place at this time, in different parts of France, all the taking and retaking of towns, the infinity of small combats, the mutual insults and retaliations, the furies, the massacres, it would take up an immense number of volumes."

Before, however, this great contest began, Catherine, during the year 1561, made three splendid efforts to avert it. With a greater breadth of view than any one else in either France or England at that time possessed, she formed a plan to assemble a National Church Council of the

leading Protestants and Roman Catholic authorities in France, and to direct their deliberations herself "*on the lines of studying the institutions of the Primitive Church, investigating how far divergencies from the latter were the cause of the complaints made by the Protestants, and seeking to arrive at a settlement on this basis.*"[1] This was a most remarkable proposal; there was no other sovereign in Europe then, or for many generations afterwards, who could have conceived the idea of assembling such a council and of personally directing its deliberations on the lines proposed.[2] And perhaps no other act of Catherine's more strongly brings out the ability and breadth of view which had been brought to the service of France by a Medici coming to occupy that throne. The idea was entirely Catherine's own, and her letters show how much she hoped for from it; and had she been able to carry out her own strong desire to keep the matter a strictly national one, and to prevent all outside interference, it is probable that success might have crowned her efforts, and France have been saved from all the miseries of the most terrible period in the history of that country.

The proclamation ordering the assembly of this National Church Council was issued on the 25th July, and on the 9th September 1561 (three weeks after Mary, Queen of Scots, a widow of nineteen, had bidden a sad adieu to France, and sailed for Scotland), the Council assembled at the

[1] *The Cambridge Modern History*, vol. iii. chap. i. It took the Church of England exactly one hundred years to find (in 1661) peace at last (after her long conflict) on the same basis.

[2] Elizabeth of England, for instance, could not have done so; and if she could not, it is certain that none other could.

monastery of Poissy, near Saint-Germain.[1] On the Protestant side were thirty-two leading Protestant ministers, Jeanne d'Albret (who was looked upon as a host in herself), the Prince of Condé, Admiral Coligny, and a number of Protestant nobles; while on the Roman Catholic side were forty bishops, six cardinals, twelve doctors of the Sorbonne, the Cardinal of Lorraine, and his brother, the Duke of Guise. The Queen Regent, with the boy King and the rest of the royal family, the members of the Council of State, the Chancellor, Michel de l'Hôpital, and other important members of the court, made up one of the most impressive assemblages which France had ever witnessed. Catherine opened the proceedings by a speech expressing a hope that the debates might be so conducted as to bring peace to the kingdom. Fine addresses were delivered by the principal leaders on either side, and at first Catherine hoped for success. But on the 19th September there arrived Cardinal Ippolito d'Este of Ferrara, who held three archbishoprics in France, and also came as legate from the Pope, and with secret orders from the latter to stop the proceedings. And from the moment of his arrival all chance of a settlement between the two parties ended. Frequent scenes and furious discussions brought about an entire failure of this effort by the 26th September; and Catherine's concluding speech, in which she dissolved the Council, said:—"We are sorely grieved that this meeting hath not produced that fruit we had wished, so needful for the love of the whole Christian Church."

[1] It is consequently known as the Council of Poissy.

Catherine then tried another plan, and to avoid the angry recriminations of a large assembly containing many discordant elements, arranged a smaller conference, consisting of five of the leading Protestant ministers and five of the principal Roman Catholic clergy who were in favour of reforms. This conference was successful in arriving at a settlement satisfactory to both parties, and drew up a joint agreement on the disputed points concerning the Holy Communion (the chief point of dissension), and submitted this agreement to the bishops for their approval. But the latter, knowing that the Pope would never agree to it, refused their assent. Meanwhile, Catherine continued to carry out her broad-minded reforms with a view to an equal treatment by the State of both religions; various important posts were given to Protestants, fresh decrees furthering religious liberty were continually being promulgated, and Paris, strongly Roman Catholic, saw appointed as its Governor a Protestant, the son of the Constable Montmorency.

But Catherine's difficulties were enormous. Not only were constant intrigues by both the rival parties to circumvent each other taking place even while these conferences were being carried on, but also every country around was eager to take part in the conflict and make France a general battle-ground in which the religious question which divided Europe should be fought out; and Catherine had to strive hourly against anything being done which would afford a pretext to any of these adjacent powers for intervening in the strife. Her chief embarrassments came

from the fanatic Philip II. of Spain. He kept at her court as his ambassador Thomas Perrenot de Chantonnay, a man employed by Philip more in the capacity of a detective than as the envoy of a foreign power, and who threateningly told Catherine that he "knew every detail of her days." Through him Philip II. menaced her perpetually with an armed intervention by Spain on behalf of the Roman Catholic party in France. While Chantonnay, knowing that France in its present disunited state was powerless to resist such an invasion, treated the Queen with the utmost insolence on every occasion that her policy of tolerance caused her to take any step to the advantage of the Protestants. On the opposite side of France the Emperor was closely watching for some excuse to make war upon Catherine in order to recover Metz; Elizabeth of England was eagerly on the look-out for some pretext for taking arms on behalf of the Protestants; while from the Italian side the Pope and the Duke of Savoy were both anxious to join in the fray.

Catherine also laboured under another difficulty. Unlike her opponent Elizabeth, who was surrounded by a band of exceptionally able and reliable counsellors, Catherine was in this particular unusually ill provided; and, while surrounded by spies who watched and reported to their own governments every word and look of hers, she had not, as she truly said in her letters to her daughter, a single person about her in whom she could trust. At the very time that the conference with a view to a peaceful settlement in religion was sitting, a plot was set on foot by the

Protestants to carry off her younger son Henry, and set him up as a rival to his brother Charles; and another proposal was made (even in her Council of State) by one of the Roman Catholic leaders to seize herself and throw her into the Seine in a sack. This latter proposition she had the pleasure of herself hearing through the tube which she had secretly had made from the council chamber to her apartment. Added to these various perplexities she had daily "to exercise blandishments, prayers, and remonstrances" in order to keep the leaders of the two parties from coming to blows even at her court. And when the strain of so many anxieties told visibly even on her strong physique, the ambassador Chantonnay had the insolence to tell her that he believed that her indisposition was merely due to her eating too many melons; to which she replied with some dignity that "it was not the fruits of the garden, but the fruits of the spirit, which made her ill." Well might one of those acute Venetian ambassadors who watched and reported all these proceedings say that he did not know what ruler would not have made mistakes under so many difficulties, and express surprise that she did not give way to one or other of the two parties. Nor did any termination to this strain appear likely to occur; she had for a time by her tolerant measures put down the flames which had been ready to burst forth, but none saw more clearly than Catherine herself that they were not put out; and what she said in writing to her ambassador in Spain was only too true:—"The ashes of the fire which has gone out are still so

hot that the least spark will make them leap up into bigger flames than we have ever seen."

But Catherine was not yet daunted; and although both her first and second attempts to avert the impending conflict had failed, she made yet a third. Paris, violently opposed to her policy of toleration, broke out into tumults; every Sunday there was fighting of some sort round the churches; and in these quarrels lives on both sides were lost. Whereupon Chantonnay had the effrontery to tell the Queen Regent that if she did not quickly put an end to these heretics his master "would come to the assistance of her Catholic subjects and would certainly make war upon her." But Catherine came of a family who were not to be cowed by threats like this, and she told him bluntly to tell his master that she "would be mistress in her own house." Accordingly, in December 1561 she called a meeting of the States General and made a powerful speech in favour of a policy of toleration, and then summoned a third conference between the two parties to meet at Saint-Germain on the 3rd January 1562, consisting of "thirty Presidents and Councillors chosen from the eight *Parlements*,[1] and twenty members of the Privy Council including the Princes of the Blood." The proceedings began with a remarkable speech from the Chancellor in favour of allowing the two religions to live side by side in France. This was followed by a most powerful speech from Catherine herself in the same direction. After a debate of twelve days a compromise was at length agreed

[1] Francis I. divided France into provinces, each of which had its *Parlement*.

upon, which, though not all that Catherine desired, nor completely satisfactory to either party, was more agreeable to the Protestants than it was to their opponents.

Having thus at last obtained a settlement which an influential body of men representative of both parties could accept, Catherine drew up an Edict, following their recommendations, which afterwards became very celebrated under the name of the "Edict of January." This, though it did not allow the Protestants to build churches, authorised their assembling for worship; still more important than this, it gave them for the first time legal recognition, the State thus acknowledging two different religious bodies. But when this Edict (containing such an entirely new departure) was sent by the Queen to the *Parlement* to be registered and published, they altogether refused to publish it, and took up a most determined attitude. Catherine was furious; she at once mounted her horse and rode at a gallop from Saint-Germain to Paris,[1] "and," says the account, "in good sooth it seemed as though she would gallop straight into the Council chamber in order the better to demonstrate her absolute will and have the Edict registered." She found the President and Councillors obdurate; they declared that the Edict would do evil to the kingdom, and dishonour to God, and that nothing should induce them to register it; and at length the President rose to leave the hall, solemnly saying to the Queen, "Your Majesty is taking the road that will lose you crown and

[1] About ten miles.

kingdom." But Catherine was as firm on behalf of her measure of toleration as the Deputies were against it. And as we watch her standing alone before the *Parlement*, determined that they and not she should give way in a matter which she felt was the last chance of saving the country from civil war, suddenly before the mind's eye there rises that scene of thirty-two years before, at the door of the Murate convent in Florence, when she was a girl of eleven, and the whole drama seems to have been acted before on a smaller stage, and we know which side will conquer. And so it turned out; for, notwithstanding all the determination of the President and Councillors, Catherine prevailed, and before she left the council chamber she had obtained a promise that the Edict should be published on the following day; which was done. Though in publishing it the *Parlement* themselves attested that her determination had been greater than theirs by adding the words:—

"Published, read, and registered in our Court of Parlement at Paris, by reason of the importunity of those who profess the so-called new Reformed religion. And this only provisionally, while awaiting the majority of the King."

This episode completed Catherine's first year of power. And that year certainly showed no insignificant tale of work. She could not undo the harm which had been done during the years when she had compulsorily been merely an onlooker while incapacity of various kinds (first during her husband's reign, and then during that of her son)

steadily drove France towards civil war; but on getting hold of the helm she made a fine effort to save the ship from the rocks even at the eleventh hour. And her Edict of toleration immediately on coming to power in January 1561, her proclamation of July assembling a National Church Council, her broad-minded reforms in the matter of giving appointments equally to those of both religious parties, her second conference in October when the first failed, her third conference proclaimed in December when the second failed, and lastly, in January 1562, her celebrated "Edict of January," which so often formed the basis of peace in the years which followed, collectively made a record of which any ruler of a country drifting towards civil war might well be proud.

But all Catherine's efforts were rendered of no avail. The Roman Catholic party, headed by the Guises, declared her "Edict of January" to be intolerable, and that there could not be two religions side by side in France; the Protestant party declared that her Edict did not go far enough, and clamoured for further concessions; several fights, with the slaughter of opponents, took place, and both parties now prepared openly for civil war. An intercepted letter from a Protestant minister disclosed to the Guises the fact that the Protestants were plotting a wholesale massacre of the Roman Catholics in Paris; the writer of the letter quoted the examples of Gideon and Judith, and said that he "felt in his spirit a God-sent vocation to do this deed." Ten years later (on St Bartholomew's Day, 1572)

the Roman Catholics apparently felt the same "vocation." Catherine, knowing that the object of both sides was to get possession of the King, withdrew with him to Fontainebleau, first ordering the Duke of Guise not to bring an armed force into Paris, an order which he promptly proceeded to disobey; whereupon Catherine, determined to keep the antagonists apart if possible, begged Condé to quit Paris, which he did. Guise, with a Roman Catholic force, seized Paris; the Protestants, under Condé and Coligny, seized Orleans and other towns on the Loire and the Rhone; and the First Religious War had begun (May 1562). The Duke of Guise proceeded with a force to Fontainebleau, captured the Queen Regent and the King, and escorted them under a guard first to Paris and thence to Melun, where, though treated with courtesy, they were practically Guise's prisoners, and were not allowed to communicate by letter or other means with the outside world. Elizabeth of England, joining in the conflict, sent over an English force which occupied Havre and Rouen; and the war rapidly spread in both northern and southern France. Meanwhile Catherine, who after a time had managed to get free from the power of Guise, was struggling in every way to reconcile the combatants, but for some time without any success. Various battles ensued, in which at length the King of Navarre was killed, Condé taken prisoner by the Roman Catholics, and Montmorency by the Protestants.

In February 1563, while the Duke of Guise was besieging Orleans, occurred an event which, while it assisted the cause of peace at the time,

laid the seeds of still more bitter strife later on. This was the murder of the Duke of Guise, who, as he was riding unarmed back to his house, was shot by Poltrot de Meré, a Protestant who had attached himself to Guise's army in order to execute this crime, and who at his trial stated that it was Admiral Coligny who had employed him to commit the deed, though whether this was true or not has never been made clear. Francis, Duke of Guise, was a noble character, and the most deservedly beloved and honoured figure of that time, and his murder by the Protestants was the chief cause of the bitter hatred against Admiral Coligny and the Protestant party on the part of the Roman Catholics which eventually culminated in the massacre on St Bartholomew's Day ten years later.

This death of the commander on the Roman Catholic side, combined with the other events which had for the moment deprived both parties of the most fiery spirits among their leaders, gave Catherine an opportunity which she at once seized. She forthwith arranged a meeting between herself and the two chief prisoners on either side, Montmorency and Condé, at Orleans, and in a few days had caused them to agree to terms of peace which were almost exactly on the lines of her "Edict of January." And on her return to Amboise, where she was then staying, she was able, on the 19th March 1563, to proclaim, in an edict called the "Edict of Amboise," the peace which she had effected. Thus ended the First Religious War; and Catherine was so delighted at her success that she is said to have "danced for joy." She

had a right to feel satisfaction; and her joy was not dimmed by any knowledge that seven other wars of the same kind were to follow, in which the most arduous labours in the same direction were often to fail. She promptly carried off her children, Charles IX., Henry, Duke of Anjou, Francis, Duke of Alençon, and Marguerite, together with the Prince of Condé and his wife, the young Henry, now Duke of Guise, the other young Henry, now King of Navarre, and a brilliant company to Chenonceaux for a happy week of festivities to celebrate the cessation of the war. These were varied and picturesque.

"Naval battles and water *fêtes* on the Cher were followed by fireworks and torchlight dances in the long galleries, while spirited encounters took place in the woods and gardens between troops of gentlemen and ladies of the court disguised as satyrs and nymphs."[1]

Having been so successful in causing the two parties to make peace, Catherine's next move was to bind them together as much as possible by urging that it was the duty of all Frenchmen to combine to drive the English from French soil. And entirely owing to her own enthusiasm on this point, she was able three months later to assemble an army commanded by the leaders of both parties, which advanced to attack the English in Rouen, and which she herself accompanied, going into the battle herself, and saying that she "would never rest until she had driven the English out of

[1] *The Châteaux of Touraine*, by M. H. Lansdale.

France." The campaign was entirely successful, and in July the English force surrendered, and France was once more free from foreign invasion. It was the last time for many a long day that the two parties of Frenchmen were to be found fighting on the same side.

Peace having been thus brought to France for a time, Catherine caused Charles IX., now fourteen, to be installed at Rouen, and then took him on a prolonged tour through France, both to make him acquainted with his kingdom and also to keep the court away from Paris, where religious animosity was always ready to break out. This tour lasted nearly two years, from the spring of 1564 to the end of 1565, in the course of which the court visited nearly all the principal places in southern France. The court numbered over eight hundred persons, accompanied by a huge retinue of servants, and there are graphic accounts of this immense progress, which was like a moving pageant. We hear of gaily-dressed nymphs who issued from glittering rocks by the wayside, of shepherds who suddenly appeared and recited long Latin poems, and of various other diversions to beguile the tedium of the march. At Bar-le-Duc there took place the baptism of the Queen's grandchild, Christine of Lorraine, the child of Catherine's daughter Claude. And at Macon Catherine was called upon to settle a fierce sectarian quarrel over the knotty point of whether in processions the children of Protestant parents could be permitted to walk side by side with these of Roman Catholic parents. Though the fires of civil war had been

quenched, the ashes still smouldered, and while at Roussillon Catherine found it necessary to issue a further Edict calling upon each of the two parties to respect the religion of the other.

The court reached Bayonne in June 1565, where Catherine had arranged that her daughter, Elizabeth of Spain, was to meet them. There followed three weeks of balls, tournaments, and other festivities to celebrate this happy meeting. Elizabeth was accompanied by the Duke of Alva (afterwards of such evil memory in the Netherlands), who had come to Bayonne with a fixed programme, carefully settled beforehand with his master, Philip II., in accordance with which he intended to extort from Catherine agreement to three main conditions, the exclusion of all Protestants from holding any public office, the prohibition of Protestant services, and the expulsion from France of all Protestant ministers. And the Protestant writers have always maintained that at this meeting Catherine, with the utmost duplicity, made a secret compact with Alva for the extermination of Protestantism in France;[1] and that the massacre which occurred seven years later in Paris was the result of this meeting between the Queen Mother and Alva. But here we have a notable instance of how modern research overthrows long-established errors due to reliance upon the, perfectly unscrupulous, partisan writers of that epoch. For the above theory in connection with this meeting at Bayonne, a theory which had until recently become so firmly established as to be an accepted fact of history, has now been completely refuted

[1] *See* Miss Sichel's *Later Years of Catherine de' Medici*, pp. 19-21.

by the publication of the Spanish State Papers, including Alva's secret despatches to his master, Philip II. For these show that so far from anything of the kind having taken place, Alva, by his own admission, entirely *failed* to induce Catherine to agree to anything that he urged for the repression of Protestantism. He tells his master that he was unable to get her to agree to prohibit the Protestant preachers (authorised by her Edict of Amboise); or to dismiss her Chancellor, Michel de l'Hôpital; or to consent to any of the other proposals which he urged upon her; "and this notwithstanding the lofty energy and consummate prudence displayed by the Queen of Spain" to assist his efforts; adding that he found the Queen Mother "more than cold for the holy religion."[1]

The court returned to Paris at the end of the year; and during the following year (1566) Catherine, besides many labours to maintain the existing tranquillity on the religious question, was mainly occupied in getting, with the able assistance of her Chancellor, a large number of very important enactments passed for the better administration of justice throughout France. These swept away numerous unjust practices of the courts of justice, and many abuses in the management of the police which pressed severely on the people, and with which her recent prolonged progress through the country had made her acquainted. Many of the new laws thus enacted obtained a permanent place in the French legal code and were of lasting benefit to France.

[1] Spanish State Papers. *Secret Records.* Despatches of the Duke of Alva.

These four years (1563-1567) were also a time of much activity on Catherine's part in other directions. Both of what were, until 1871,[1] the two principal palaces in Paris are inseparably connected with her name. The palace of the Louvre, begun a few years before his death by Francis I. on the designs of the architect Lescot, was completed by the end of Henry II.'s reign, and Catherine was the first sovereign of France to occupy it, when she came to power after her son Francis II.'s death. And in the year 1564 she began building her own palace of the Tuileries,[2] connecting it with the Louvre by a long gallery passing through the crowded quarter of the city which then occupied the intervening space.[3] For this palace she employed the celebrated architect Philibert de l'Orme, who had been ousted from royal favour by the Guises during Francis II.'s reign, but whom Catherine on coming to power reinstated. Besides this work she was also busy in making extensive improvements at Fontainebleau, Chenonceaux, and others of the royal residences, in collecting objects of art of all kinds, and in patronising literature. And notwithstanding all the storms of war through which France passed during the years of Catherine's rule, they form a notable epoch in French literature, the poets

[1] The palace of the Tuileries, after being greatly enlarged by successive sovereigns of France, was in 1871 entirely destroyed by the Communists, and only its beautiful gardens now remain.

[2] From *tuile*, a tile. For the reason for the name *see* pp. 120-121.

[3] It was just at this time (December 1564) that in Florence Cosimo I. was constructing his similar but much longer gallery, the "Passaggio," through a portion of that city to connect the Ducal palace with the Palazzo Vecchio, in the same manner as Catherine connected the Tuileries with the Louvre.

Ronsard, Du Bellay, Belleau, Binet, and other lesser stars having made this period famous by their collective name of "the Pleïade."

Catherine's Edict of Amboise, supplemented by that issued at Roussillon, had kept France free from war for four years. The religious animosities, however, fomented on the one side by the Calvinists in Geneva,[1] and on the other by the intolerant temper of the Guise faction, at length again blazed out, and in September 1567 the Second Religious War was begun by an attempt made by the Protestants to seize the person of the young King while the court was at Meaux. The battle of St Denis followed, in which the Constable Montmorency was killed. During the next six months severe fighting took place in various parts of France, in the course of which the Protestants took Rochelle, which became their permanent headquarters. Eventually, in March 1568 this second war was brought to an end by the so-called Peace of Longjumeau.

How untiring were Catherine's efforts to maintain peace, and how great the difficulties of the task, is shown in the reports of the various ambassadors. Thus the Spanish envoy Alava,[2] in one of his secret reports to Philip II., informs him that as the Queen was coming one day from the council chamber, and when he, being pressed by her to say why he looked at her as he did, remarked in reply that her eyes were swollen with weeping, "She said: 'It is but

[1] Calvin himself had died in 1564.
[2] Not to be confounded with the Duke of Alva.

too true, but I have every reason, for alone and single-handed I bear the burden of affairs. You would be amazed (so she spake) if you understood what has just happened. I no longer know in whom I can trust.'"[1] Again the Venetian ambassador, Giovanni Correr,[2] reports thus:—

"I do not know what prince would not have made mistakes in such a great confusion; how much more a woman, a foreigner, without trusty friends, frightened, and never hearing the truth from those about her. For my part, I have often been surprised that she did not become thoroughly confused, and give way to one or other of the two parties; which would have been a final calamity to the kingdom. It is she alone who has preserved the remnant of royal majesty still to be found there. For this reason I have always pitied rather than blamed her; and she has often reminded me of it when speaking of her distresses and the woes of France."

Words such as these give a vivid picture of the difficulties which Catherine's policy entailed on her, and of the ability with which she adhered to it. Nevertheless, difficult though it might be, the correctness of that policy is shown by the

[1] Spanish State Papers.

[2] Of all the Venetian ambassadors during these thirty years M. Armand Baschet singles out as by far the most distinguished Giovanni Correr, who came as ambassador to France during the Second Religious War, and who, he says, "writes with a talent which reveals a profound insight." Giovanni Correr was on more intimate terms with Catherine than any of his successors, and so largely did she discuss all affairs with him that M. Baschet considers that "to obtain a just idea of Catherine de' Medici during this period it is entirely necessary to study the remarkable pages of this most capable ambassador." (*La Diplomatie Vénitienne*, by M. Armand Baschet.)

ambassador's remark that her abandonment of it would have been a final calamity to the kingdom.

The peace made at Longiumeau proved but of short duration. The two parties had no real intention of becoming reconciled, and in August 1568 the Third Religious War began, and was fought with great ferocity on both sides. Two months after it began Catherine heard of the death of her favourite daughter, Elizabeth of Spain, at the age of twenty-four. Catherine's grief thereat was very great, but she had little time to indulge it, as the terrible state of affairs which now supervened in France claimed her whole energies. In March 1569 was fought the battle of Jarnac, in which the Prince of Condé was killed. That which Catherine had long laboured to prevent now occurred,—the participation of other countries in the conflict. A German army entered France to assist the Protestants, and a Spanish one to assist the Roman Catholics; and with the entrance upon the scene of these foreigners the contest took a more savage character. The leaders on both sides gave orders to their troops to give no quarter; city after city upon being taken was sacked; "whole garrisons had their throats cut"; and the war assumed the appearance rather of one between fanatical Hindus and Mahomedans than between people of a civilised race. The time was a terrible one — for both Protestants and Roman Catholics. The various woes suffered were enormous. But all that we are concerned with

in this history is Catherine's conduct in connection with them.

The Protestants (who could not be retaliated upon in the same way) delighted in destroying and defiling everything which in the eyes of their opponents was sacred; they demolished churches and mutilated shrines, they dragged crucifixes and relics in the mud, they gave the Holy Sacrament to dogs and cattle and greased their boots with the holy oil, they profaned the sepulchres of the ancestors of the reigning family, "they burnt at Cleri the bones of St Louis, King of France, and at St Croix the heart of Francis I.," they destroyed the beauty of every building on which they could lay hands, and in short poured out their fury upon everything which to the French people represented refinement, care for religion, and pride in the past history of their race. This conduct roused their antagonists to frenzy; a cry of fiercest wrath and a vow of vengeance went up from all Catholic France; and instead of one massacre of St Bartholomew's Day, it was more to be expected that there should have been a dozen such in different cities of France. And, in fact, we find contemporary writers after that massacre speaking in this very strain, and saying that it was no more than a due retaliation for all that the Protestants had done throughout France, not only in massacring their opponents, but also in their hateful destruction and desecration of everything revered by the latter. How deeply Catherine felt all this misery which in spite of her strong efforts to avert it had descended upon France can be seen in her letters. She says:—

"I do not think there is any one in the world who can feel more pained and horrified at the atrocious evils wrought by the foreign troops than I, who am dying of it on my feet."[1]

The popular feeling of maddened indignation and hatred was most of all rampant in Paris; while second only to the citizens' rage against the Protestants was their wrath against the Queen Mother for her tolerant Edicts allowing to Protestants liberty of worship and prohibiting persecution of them. The Parisians declared her policy to be "like ordering the cats and the rats to live at peace together"; they petitioned for leave to abandon France and go to live in some country where they might practise in freedom the Catholic religion; and when she ordered her Edict of toleration to be read to the people from the pulpits, the priests not only refused to do so, but again and again referred to her in their sermons as "Jezebel." It was no wonder that Catherine wrote: "All the towns in the kingdom would not cause me one half the evils I endure from Paris alone." Nor is it any wonder, with Protestants in such a state that they could commit the enormities which have been mentioned, and with Roman Catholics calling the Queen Mother "Jezebel" because she would persist in allowing their enemies liberty of worship, no record of Catherine's actions emanating from either side is to be relied upon, except where such is corroborated from more trustworthy sources, or by facts admitted by these writers themselves in formulating their indictments against her, as for instance

[1] *Lettres de Catherine de Medicis.*

this one of her persistent pursuit of a policy of toleration.

Catherine at this time, feeling Paris an unsafe abode, and knowing, on the other hand, how eager the Protestants were to capture the young King, while southern France was in too great a state of conflagration to afford an asylum, carried him off to Metz, where for some time the court took refuge. She still laboured for peace, and on the same lines of mutual toleration, and writes:—

"If those who started the war had had the patience to let us complete what we had begun at Saint-Germain,[1] we should not be in the difficulties we now are in regard to bringing about a durable peace; which, after all, even when it is obtained, cannot be more satisfactory to both parties than the old Edict of January."[2]

After various important cities had been taken and retaken the battle of Moncontour was fought in October 1569, at which the Protestants, now commanded by Coligny, sustained a severe defeat. More sieges followed, but at length, in August 1570, Catherine succeeded in bringing the war to an end by arranging the peace of Saint-Germain-en-Laye in which the terms obtained by the Protestant party were even more favourable to them than those contained in her "Edict of January." Nevertheless, as the result Catherine only reaped abuse from both parties. Philip II., urgently demanding that the war should be continued until the Protestants were completely crushed, was full of wrath at any peace having been

[1] Her Edict of January, 1562.
[2] *Lettres de Catherine de Medicis.*

made; the Roman Catholic party in France declared that the terms of the peace which the Queen Mother had arranged were far too favourable to their foes, and that "the vanquished had been treated as though they were the victors"; while the Protestant party declared that the terms were not favourable enough, and also that they were only a trap laid for them by the duplicity of the Queen Mother. But Catherine had to consider France as a whole; the country was utterly exhausted by these furious wars, its condition altogether deplorable, and a cessation of this fratricidal strife absolutely necessary. Any peace between two combatants which strikes at all an even balance between them is always considered unfair by both. That which Catherine had effected at Saint-Germain-en-Laye was of this nature, and M. Lavallée speaks no more than the truth when he says: — "It was another effort to make the two religions live together, and to give some repose to exhausted France." As to the accusation against Catherine of duplicity on this and other similar occasions, while they are only what was to be expected from the state in which France was, they probably gained their chief material from the necessity perpetually laid upon Catherine, if France was not to be invaded by the Spaniards, of outwitting Chantonnay, between whom and herself an hourly duel (on his part in order to discover what were her intentions, and on her part to hide them from him) was ceaselessly fought.

Undoubtedly this peace was a great triumph for Catherine, the second of this kind which she

had gained. For the results proved her wisdom. Notwithstanding the wrathful grumbling of the Roman Catholics that the terms were too favourable to the Protestants, and of the Protestants that they were not favourable enough, France quieted down, and the Protestants went to their *prêches* and the Roman Catholics to Mass without molesting each other. Catherine was overjoyed at her success; and though she saw that after so fierce a storm the waves could only be expected to calm down by degrees, she had good hopes of being able to create permanent harmony, "and," as she says in her letters, "make a nation of France." Speaking of those who declared that the miseries of France had all been caused by her refusal to suppress the heretics, she writes:—

"If things were even worse than they are after all this war they might have laid the blame upon the rule of a woman; but if such persons are honest they should blame only the rule of men who desire to play the part of kings.[1] In future, if I am not any more hampered, I hope to show that women have a more sincere determination to preserve the country than those who have plunged it into the miserable condition to which it has been brought."[2]

Catherine now had leisure to turn her attention to other affairs than the miseries of war, and to think of matrimonial projects and artistic concerns. Her palace of the Tuileries was by this time nearly finished, and she delighted in laying out its gardens and in arranging to adorn them with all sorts of examples of the new art in earthenware pottery

[1] The Guises. [2] *Lettres de Catherine de Medicis.*

which had been invented by the celebrated Palissy. She had a year or two before rescued him from extreme poverty, as well as from persecution as an ardent Protestant, and she now established him as superintendent over these various works at the Tuileries. At Chenonceaux also she was busy in laying out new gardens on an elaborate plan, and here too she employed Palissy to assist her; while in many other directions she indulged those artistic tastes which she had inherited.

The marriage of her children also now occupied her attention. The peace between the two rival parties in France enabled her to set on foot three matrimonial projects, all intended to cement the reconciliation and make it permanent. These were, the marriage of her son, Charles IX., now twenty, to Elizabeth of Austria, the daughter of the tolerant Emperor Maximilian II.; that of her next son, Henry, Duke of Anjou, to Elizabeth, Queen of England; and that of her daughter Marguerite to Henry of Navarre, the son of the redoubtable Protestant, Jeanne d'Albret. The first of these marriages, that of Charles IX. to Elizabeth of Austria, was soon carried out, and they were married in November 1570. The negotiations for the marriage of Elizabeth, Queen of England, to Catherine's son Henry (or failing him, with his younger brother, the Duke of Alençon), dragged on for years, and were eventually dropped. But the third marriage, that of the Princess Marguerite to Henry of Navarre, was also carried out, and took place two years after that of her brother Charles. Elizabeth of Austria, Catherine's new daughter-in-law, was virtuous, wise, and had in

every way a charming disposition; having no taste for politics, she occupied her time almost entirely in numerous charitable works, and was looked upon by the people as a saint. She was very sincere in her religion, and when at her coronation, at which she was to receive the Holy Communion, various unforeseen delays caused the ceremony, instead of taking place in the morning as intended, to be delayed until three in the afternoon, she remained fasting the whole day; and although (it being feared that she might faint) authority was given for her to break her fast, she would not do so, "and," says the record, "received the Holy Communion at six in the evening as upright and gay as though it were six in the morning."

The difficulties in the way of Catherine's project for the marriage of her son, Henry of Anjou, with Elizabeth of England were mainly created by the Pope, who foresaw in it a possibility of the Church of France seceding from his authority in the same way as the Church of England had done. But, great as these difficulties were, those which had to be overcome in connection with the project for the marriage of the Princess Marguerite with Henry of Navarre (which marriage was Catherine's main attempt to bind the two hostile forces in France together) were greater still. For not only was the Pope equally opposed to this project for similar reasons, but also Henry's mother, the strong-minded and stern Calvinist Jeanne d'Albret,[1]

[1] Jeanne d'Albret was the daughter of Francis I.'s sister Marguerite, who had married Henri d'Albret. Jeanne herself married Antoine de Bourbon, Duc de Vendome, and was Queen of Navarre in her own right, her son Henry only becoming King of Navarre at her death.

had great doubts as to whether she could allow her son to marry a Roman Catholic, much as she desired the match from every other point of view. However, having at length made up her mind to agree to it, but to keep her son as much as possible away from Roman Catholic influences, she came, early in 1572, to Paris in order to conduct the negotiations herself, ordering her son to remain in Navarre until she had completed them. Jeanne d'Albret had been in bad health for some time, and the feverish energy with which she threw herself into the preparations for her son's marriage exhausted her remaining strength; finding her health failing, she summoned her son from Navarre, but died in Paris on the 9th June before he arrived. Catherine visited her on her death-bed, and wrote in admiration of her patient endurance of her sufferings. It has for three centuries been a favourite story that Jeanne d'Albret was poisoned by the Queen Mother by means of a perfume which Jeanne had bought from Catherine's perfumer. The story, which had its origin in libels published by the Calvinists at Geneva, has been repeatedly disproved by the most reliable historians, as well as by the reports of Jeanne d'Albret's two physicians, Caillard and Desnœuds, both of them Protestants who had written many things against the Roman Catholic party, and would at once have denounced such a crime had it occurred. But nevertheless the story continues to hold its ground, no amount of disproof, nor even the fact that Catherine was scarcely likely to endeavour to overthrow a plan which she had so long laboured to achieve, having had any

weight against so fascinating a piece of sensational fiction. The most recent authority on the subject dismisses the story in the following words:—

"A legend that she (Jeanne d' Albret) had been poisoned long formed one of the stock charges against the Queen Mother. There is as little evidence for it as for most of the similar accusations brought in those days."[1]

Henry of Navarre, accompanied by five hundred Protestant gentlemen, arrived in Paris a few days after his mother's death, where Admiral Coligny, the young Prince of Condé, and a great concourse of the Protestant party, were already assembled for this marriage which was to heal all wounds and bind the two parties firmly together. And on the 18th August 1572 the Princess Marguerite and Henry, King of Navarre, were married in the midst of a grand assembly of all the principal men of both parties, and with much magnificence. A ball at the Louvre followed in the evening, and the festivities continued throughout the next three days.

But this great gathering of the rival parties in a city at all times so inflammable as Paris had serious dangers for the preservation of the state of outward tranquillity which had now been maintained for two years. The things which the Protestants had done in desecrating and destroying all that their opponents held dear were not forgotten; and the citizens of Paris, who had so long loathed Catherine's policy of toleration towards their opponents, were roused to a white heat of animosity at seeing the

[1] *The Cambridge Modern History*, vol. iii. chap. i.

marriage of their King's sister to the leader of the rival community; while many of the attendant circumstances of the ceremony were highly unpalatable to them. On the other hand, the majority of the Protestant party liked the marriage no better, thinking they saw in it a design to entrap their leader, Henry of Navarre, into becoming a Roman Catholic. Neither party, so far as their subordinate members were concerned, took any pains to hide their contempt and hatred of the other, or to avoid offending their religious sentiments. Even the marriage ceremony itself, at which the whole body of the Protestant gentlemen had ostentatiously withdrawn when the celebration of the Mass began and gone to walk up and down outside in the gardens, provided fuel to the slumbering fires. Moreover, there were still deeper causes of enmity at work; Henry, Duke of Guise, the leader of the Roman Catholic party, looked upon Admiral Coligny as the treacherous murderer of his father, Francis, Duke of Guise, a crime which Henry, his mother, and the whole family of Guise were firmly determined to avenge on the first opportunity, Henry's mother being specially urgent with him to take this vengeance. So that this marriage, intended to bind the opposing forces together, had within it all the elements for a fresh outburst of their enmity; hatred and suspicion were rampant on both sides, and it needed but a spark to set all Paris in a blaze.

That spark was soon supplied. On the 22nd August, four days after the marriage, Admiral Coligny, walking from the Louvre to his house, was fired at from the window of a house inhabited

by one of the retainers of the Duke of Guise,[1] and wounded in the hand and arm. The King and Queen Mother, knowing the seething state of Paris, and being in the greatest anxiety lest anything should be done by either party which might bring on a conflict and civil war in Paris itself, immediately on hearing of this outrage visited Coligny, expressed the greatest concern at what had happened, and sent the King's own surgeon, Ambrose Paré, a Protestant, to attend Coligny, and a guard of their own soldiers to protect his house; they offered the Protestant nobles lodgings round their leader; and they promised Coligny that there should be a strict search for the criminal and his prompt punishment. The house was at once searched, but the man, whoever he was, had escaped. These actions were, of course, put down by the Protestants to "dissimulation" on the part of the Queen Mother, but there is not a particle of proof to support the charge. They are just such as would be natural in the position in which Catherine found herself, placed between two bitterly hostile parties who could only be kept at peace from hour to hour with difficulty, while a conflict within Paris itself threatened to engulf the throne, and would in any case bring to ruin all that Catherine had striven for and hoped that she had achieved by the marriage just concluded.

This outrage upon Coligny brought matters to a climax. All through the 23rd August secret plots were going on, each party (frightened and

[1] Salviati asserts that Guise had wished that his mother should herself fire the shot.

suspicious) plotting to massacre the other; and at early dawn on the morning of the 24th (St Bartholomew's Day), the Roman Catholic party suddenly rushed upon their opponents. Armed bands headed by the Guises, the Duke of Angoulême, and other Roman Catholic nobles issued into the streets and roused the only too eager Paris mob to fall upon the Protestants throughout the city. The Duke of Guise at once hurried with all speed to Coligny's house accompanied by a band of his own soldiers, who, overpowering the guard, forced their way into Coligny's chamber and murdered him. His party were taken by surprise, the fanatical hatred of the citizens burst forth like a river long dammed up, and the Protestants (with the exception of the Prince of Condé, the King of Navarre, Michel de l'Hôpital, and others whom Catherine protected, either in the Louvre or by sending strong guards to defend their houses) were brutally massacred throughout Paris.[1]

The historian Sully, speaking of this massacre, says:—

"The whole house of Guise had been personally animated against the Admiral ever since the assassination of Francis, Duke of Guise, by Poltrot de Meré, whom they believed to have been instigated to this crime by Coligny; and it must be admitted that the Admiral was never able to clear himself of the charge. If this cruel slaughter was, as many people are fully persuaded, only the effect of the revenge of the house of Guise, . . . it must be confessed that no person ever executed

[1] Lord Acton after careful computation considered that the number of persons slain in this massacre was rather over 2,000.

so severe a vengeance for an offence as did Henry, Duke of Guise, for his noble father's murder."

The Protestant writers have maintained that this massacre was a long-premeditated scheme, but this view is no longer held by historians, fuller knowledge having shown that the Spanish ambassador, Çuniga, spoke the truth when he reported that, with the exception of the murder of Coligny, the rest was due to sudden impulse. It remains to consider whether Catherine is to be held responsible for this massacre, as, on the authority of the infuriated Protestants, has so long been declared, or whether the charge of responsibility on her part was only another result of their long-standing prejudice against her, one which made French Protestants prefer to lay this crime on the shoulders of "the Italian woman" rather than on any of their own nation. First, as to the murder of Coligny, one of the two murders which have always been charged against Catherine,[1] and both of which accusations are now considered to have been unjustly made against her. The circumstances under which it is now known that Coligny's murder took place, the fact that Catherine is acknowledged to have had no special feeling against him, and, above all, the fact that this murder meant the ruin of a plan to achieve which she had laboured hard for two years, appear sufficient to dispose of this charge.[2]

Catherine's part in the massacre as a whole is a question on which (like that of the guilt or

[1] *Vide* p. 69.
[2] *See* also pp. 59, 125, 127, and 136.

innocence of Mary, Queen of Scots) opposite opinions will probably always continue to be held. And this is inevitable, because the only records of her actions on these three days (22nd to 24th August) are all furnished by persons who were violent partisans of one side or the other, and at a time when none took pen in hand with any other idea than to obscure the truth as much as possible for the advantage of his party. The Protestants desired to show the Queen Mother and her son the King as guilty of the crime perpetrated against themselves; while the Roman Catholics desired to show that in what they did the Queen Mother and the King were on their side. The following fact is eloquent as to the way in which, under such conditions, the history of this affair has been written. It was declared by the Protestants that Charles IX. had himself assisted in the massacre by firing at their co-religionists from a window of the Louvre; the very window was pointed out, and so thoroughly was this fact supposed to be authenticated that a tablet to that effect was in after years affixed to the window. This tablet was, however, removed in 1802, *on its being discovered that that wing of the palace was not even built until the reign of Henry IV.*[1] It is from accounts written in this fashion that we have to gather what Catherine's words and actions within the Louvre were at this time.

None know really what went on in the Louvre during the 22nd and 23rd August preceding the

[1] Notwithstanding this, the custodians who show the building to visitors still continue to repeat this story, and so to perpetuate false "history" (*see* p. 68, footnote).

commencement of the massacre on the morning of the 24th; and it is upon this that the question of Catherine's part in the matter turns.[1] Two things only are certain: first, that of those around Catherine during these three days *there is not one, either Protestant or Roman Catholic, French, English, or Italian, whose word on the subject we can trust in the smallest degree*; and, second, that if Catherine were responsible for this massacre, then it was the only occasion in her life that she resorted to violent measures.[2]

Even the Venetian ambassadors fail us at this point in Catherine's history, and throw no light as regards the massacre in August 1572. There is a long gap in the Venetian State Papers at this part of the sixteenth century, the official despatches of this period having been lost. The regular ambassador at this time at the court of France was Sigismondo Cavalli. In addition to him an ambassador extraordinary, Giovanni Michieli, had just been deputed to that court for a special purpose connected with the proceedings of Spain in Flanders. And in default of the official despatches all that we have is a semi-private account by this Giovanni Michieli, which is by no means equally trustworthy.[3] This purports to give a circumstantial report of the proceedings in the Louvre, charges Catherine with the sole

[1] As, for instance, the assertion of her having assembled "a Council of murder" in the gardens of the Tuileries on the 23rd August, at which the massacre is said to have been decided upon. (*See* Miss Sichel's *The Later Years of Catherine de' Medici*, p. 167.)

[2] All the authorities who hold her to have been responsible for the massacre admit this.

[3] The Venetian ambassadors were under compulsion not to allow any bias to enter into their official despatches to their Government, since this might mislead the latter.

responsibility both for Coligny's murder and for the general massacre, and states that her action was the result of a long-premeditated plan, and that the whole scheme of the marriage of Henry of Navarre and Marguerite had been merely a trap to inveigle all the leading Protestants to Paris. But the remarks made by M. Merimée show how little real value can be attached to this statement of Giovanni Michieli. M. Merimée says:—

"I cannot admit that the same men could have been able to conceive a crime whose results must be so important, and to execute it so badly. The measures, in fact, were so ill taken that soon after the Saint Bartholomew the war began afresh, the reformers certainly winning all the glory of it, and retiring from it with new advantages. In short, is not the assault on Coligny, which took place two days before the Saint Bartholomew, sufficient to refute the supposition of a conspiracy? Why kill the chief before the general massacre? Was not this the way to alarm the Huguenots and put them on their guard?"[1]

Giovanni Michieli, in fact, was not in a position to furnish information of any value. He had only reached Paris a week or two before; he was unable to base his opinion on any observations of his own, as he appears to have had as yet no communication with the Queen Mother (who had only arrived from Lorraine just before the marriage); and he is only able to relate what he had "heard on this subject from persons highly situated who have access to the secrets of the court"; in other words, from just those persons whose evidence, as already noted, is in this case absolutely worthless.

[1] *Chronique du temps de Charles IX.*, by M. Merimée.

We are therefore left to form such inferences as we may from the surer ground of collateral evidence, and from the following considerations:—

(i) If Catherine was responsible for instigating this massacre, then she committed an act which is at variance with the whole of the rest of a policy steadily pursued by her for a long number of years, in spite of the greatest difficulties, and to carry out which she had made formidable enemies; and an act which entirely stultified that policy.

(ii) Again, if she was responsible for this massacre, then one possessing one of the most acute intellects ever seen upon a throne took action which caused all her special efforts of the preceding two years to be absolutely thrown away, and destroyed the effect of a marriage to achieve which she had undergone severe labours, and had incurred much odium from a large part of the French people. Also it is impossible that she should not have foreseen that it would be at once declared that the marriage was a long-premeditated scheme to entrap the Protestants to their destruction.

(iii) As this massacre began the Fourth Religious War, Catherine, who had everything to gain by peace and to lose by war, yet becomes, by the hypothesis, the deliberate originator of that war.

How far the theory that Catherine de' Medici was responsible for the massacre on St Bartholomew's Day will square with these facts is a point

which each must decide for himself.[1] They cannot be slurred over or explained away, but must be faced.

What, however, is probably the truest view of this question was long ago pointed out by a Protestant historian, "the fair-minded Ranke," who stated that the responsibility for this massacre had been unfairly placed by the French people on the shoulders of Catherine de' Medici, whereas it was they themselves who must bear it; for that this massacre was caused entirely by their own state of wild fanaticism and the frenzied hatred by which at the moment both of the religious factions who faced each other in Paris were possessed.[2]

The two parties into which Frenchmen were

[1] We have also to remember that even Michelet, with all his hatred of her, considered that she was not guilty, either of instigating Coligny's death, or of responsibility for the massacre on St Bartholomew's Day.

[2] But while the responsibility for the massacre on St Bartholomew's Day, 1572, must be borne by the French people themselves, it would be quite a mistake to suppose that the English can cast any stones at them in this respect. Seven years later there occurred in Ireland a massacre of the Roman Catholic population of the province of Munster, carried out by English Protestant troops under the special orders of Queen Elizabeth, which was greater in degree and not in any way less revolting in character than the massacre in Paris; while it had far less excuse. We have the crime of these Roman Catholics stated by a certain Sir William Drury to be that they had "infinite Masses in their churches every morning without any fear. I spied them, for I chanced to arrive last Sunday at five in the morning and saw them resort out of the churches by heaps. This is shameful in a reformed city." It is strange that while the French massacre is copiously commented on, this English one is seldom, if ever, mentioned. But the fair-minded Ranke sees no reason for any such distinction, and relates what took place as follows:—"The English Protestants . . . punished their opponents with fearful cruelty. Men and women were driven into barns and there burnt to death; children were strangled; all Munster was laid waste; and English (Protestant) colonists took possession of the depopulated province." Well, therefore, may we bear in mind with reference to the Paris massacre, that it was not only in France, or by one religious party, that at this period such tragedies were enacted.

divided, furiously embittered against each other by many cruel deeds during ten years of conflict, and brought into close juxtaposition in a single city, were seething with animosity, and from the moment that Guise's retainer fired upon Coligny were bent upon massacring each other; it was only a question of hours which should be the assailant, while the knowledge of what their opponents were planning drove each forward. The Protestant party who had marched into Paris in confident strength, had already once before planned to massacre the Roman Catholics in Paris,[1] and it was to a large extent fear of what their opponents might do which caused the rapid resolve of the Roman Catholics to be the first in the field. "The night, the unexpected situation, the thought of having in the Louvre itself thirty or forty of the most redoubtable Protestants, a Pardaillon, a De Piles, the first swordsmen of France,"[2] all combined to make Guise and his party rush to massacre their opponents before the latter should do the same to them, and to force the Queen Mother and the King to stand aside while they worked their will upon their foes. Catherine between the two antagonists had only one object, that which she had always had, to preserve the throne from being overwhelmed in the storm. But she was placed in a more difficult position than hitherto, owing to the close proximity of the two foes. Walsingham, the English Minister, afterwards told her that it would have been easy to seize the persons who were plotting on the

[1] *See* p. 105.
[2] *Guerres de religion*, by Michelet.

Protestant side, and so have avoided the explosion; but his argument took no account of the fact that any force with which she could have done so must have been a Roman Catholic one, and that would at once have brought about the same catastrophe. As far as can be judged in the absence of any record that can be trusted, Catherine, for once in her life, was thoroughly frightened (as well she might be), and seeing that a conflict was going to take place which she had no longer any power to prevent, sought only to keep herself and her children and her daughter's husband from being destroyed in it. While the massacre was spreading through the city, she sent her commands to the Roman Catholics to desist, but no one paid any attention to her, and for the time being Paris was as much beyond any control as a city in which a sack was taking place.

The truth is that France had become by this time so maddened by these furious religious wars that such a massacre was likely at any time in any city; and as a matter of fact, as soon as the news of what had occurred in Paris spread, similar massacres did take place in one or two other towns. It is also evident that Queen Elizabeth of England did not attach much credit to the reports of Catherine's responsibility in the matter, for though she thought it politic to express her reprobation of the massacre, she did not break off the negotiations for her own marriage with Catherine's son.

The above massacre ruined all Catherine's plans. During the visit which she and her son had paid to Coligny when he was wounded, Charles IX. had

said, looking angrily at the Duke of Guise: "It is I who am attacked"; whereupon Catherine had added: "It is all France." And she was right; the flames of war were relighted, destined to cause still greater desolation and misery to France than even that which the country had already experienced. The Fourth Religious War began at once, and raged with great fury for the whole of the next twelve months, until in July 1573 a temporary truce was effected, called the Peace of Rochelle, as before on the lines of Catherine's now celebrated "Edict of January."

## (1574-1589)

The Peace of Rochelle proved nothing more than a six months' truce, and in February 1574 the Fifth Religious War broke out. Three months later, in May 1574, Charles IX. died;[1] and as he left only a daughter,[2] he was succeeded by his brother, Henry III., then twenty-three. When Charles IX.'s Queen, the good Elizabeth of Austria, was condoled with because her child was not a boy, she replied that she was glad of it, since that would only have added yet further divisions to cause affliction to distracted France.

Henry III., Catherine's favourite son, who now ascended the throne, was a strange character, inheriting more of his father's peculiar disposition than either of his brothers, but with all his father's

[1] The story that Charles IX. died through remorse for the massacre of St Bartholomew's Day, a story sedulously propagated by the Protestants, is not corroborated by any evidence, and does not now obtain any credit among historians.

[2] This daughter died at the age of five.

weak points greatly intensified. He had plenty of intelligence, had been made Lieutenant-General of the realm, and taken part with distinction in the various campaigns during the previous five years (including the battles of Jarnac and Moncontour), and had eight months before been elected as King of Poland, where he governed with much success, and won the greatest admiration from the Poles, notwithstanding that they were mostly Protestants. But his abilities were combined with an indolence which caused him, on becoming King of France, to make his mother undertake all affairs that were troublesome, and also with a taste for the most extravagant follies, a taste which became more pronounced as he grew older. On hearing in Poland that he had become King of France he arranged a midnight escape from his faithful Polish subjects in the manner of a conspirator fleeing for his life. Entertaining at this time a violent passion for the Princess of Condé, he poured forth the most extravagant sentiments to her in letters written in his blood;[1] but on hearing of her sudden death, he showed his grief by wearing little silver death's heads all over his dress, even on his shoe ribbons, and after a week appeared completely to forget her, and became entirely occupied in making proposals of marriage to a young lady, Louise de Vaudemont, whom he had chanced to see a month or two before at Nancy. Meanwhile, he went off to Avignon, and while there joined "the flagellants";[2] and insisted on the ladies of the

[1] "His secretary opened and closed the puncture whenever it was necessary to fill the pen."

[2] So called because they struck their backs and shoulders with whips in penance for their sins.

court, and even his mother, doing so also. His follies and extravagant vagaries were innumerable, each more fantastic than the last. His mother idolised him; she could refuse him nothing; and those who have held that Catherine de' Medici was without the softer feelings natural to a woman have only to study the expressions in her letters wherever the name of her son Henry occurs to discover that this view is far from the truth.

We have a somewhat touching glimpse of Catherine at this period in connection with a visit which, while staying at Lyons, she paid to the studio of the painter Corneille de Lyon. There, looking round the pictures on the walls, she saw one of herself as she had been about five-and-twenty years before, "attired in the French *mode*, with a little cap edged with pearls, and a dress having large sleeves of silver tissue, lined with lynx." After gazing at it sadly for a few moments, recalling as it did the memories of the years of her long trial, in the days of Diane de Poictiers, she turned to the Duc de Nemours and said: "Cousin, you remember well the time and fashion of this picture; and you can say, better than any of those around us, if I was once as I am painted here."

Henry III. was crowned at Rheims on the 13th February 1575, and two days afterwards married Louise de Vaudemont. Her father was the Count de Vaudemont, and it speaks well for Henry, as a counterpoise to his many follies, that he thus chose for himself the daughter of a simple gentleman of France (whose family were not even wealthy), rather than any of the royal

princesses who had been spoken of as a desirable match for the new King of France. His choice proved an excellent one; Louise had a charming character, her beautiful disposition, modesty wisdom, and innate goodness being praised by all writers; she shone like a star amidst the corruptions of the court, yet gave offence to none, and was respected by all around her, while her husband invariably treated her with deference and affection. Both Protestants and Roman Catholics had at last found one point at all events on which they could agree, for both of them loved and reverenced "La Reine Blanche," as Louise came to be called. And it is one of the brightest spots in the character of Catherine de' Medici that she was intensely fond of Louise de Vaudemont, and showed it to the last hour of her life.

Meanwhile, the Fifth Religious War continued to rage over France, and an end to the conflict seemed as far off as ever, "though," we are told, "the Queen Mother did not cease to labour for peace tooth and nail." At last, however, in April 1576, a peace was concluded at Beaulieu, again on the basis of Catherine's "Edict of January." And this time France obtained rest for nearly a year.

Nothing could better show how thoroughly the Edict for which Catherine had fought and won her struggle with the *Parlement* in January 1562 provided just that balance between the two parties which the needs of France required than the fact that again and again after war had raged we find the Protestants, in negotiating for peace, stipulating for the terms of this Edict, and again and again

find peace between the combatants made on its basis. If only the two parties had been sufficiently ready "to live and let live" to have adhered to it, France would, through Catherine's celebrated measure of toleration, have saved itself many years of misery. Some have held that there was in Catherine's career, as the ruling spirit of France a Protestant period and a Roman Catholic period, and a complete change from the former to the latter after the year 1562;[1] but this constant attainment of peace on the basis of her "Edict of January" time after time for so many years afterwards entirely contradicts this, and refutes the idea that there was ever this change in her attitude. It was just because her attitude remained always unchanged that the same Edict, published so many years before, was able to form the basis of each peace that she brought about.

This spirit of tolerance and natural attraction for freedom is a remarkable feature in Catherine's character in view of the opinion on that point which was universal in her day. Nothing roused greater wrath and contempt in the men of that age than to note a spirit of tolerance in a ruler; they invariably attributed it to either weakness, lukewarmness, or duplicity. And seeing that, after all, Catherine was a Roman Catholic, and as such necessarily had more sympathy with that side in the contest, that she should so steadfastly have adopted a policy of toleration shows a degree of broad-minded statesmanship of which she had considerable reason to be proud. It was undoubtedly due to Florentine ideas, and to that republican

[1] *See* Miss Sichel's *Catherine de' Medici*, p. 23.

atmosphere in which she had been born and brought up, and which had been traditional in her family.[1] Ideas of freedom in political life lead naturally to ideas of freedom in religion. One outcome of this spirit on Catherine's part was a notable one. For when we remember how terrible were the horrors of the Inquisition, nothing tends more strongly to make us regard Catherine de' Medici with favour than the fact that at a time when the Inquisition was perpetrating its detestable enormities in every other country round—in Spain, in Italy, in the Netherlands, and every other Roman Catholic country—Catherine boldly refused during all the years of her life to allow it to be established in France. This brought upon her the enmity of both the Pope and the fanatical Philip II. of Spain, whose vengeance in the defenceless state of France could only be warded off by much diplomacy on Catherine's part, with, as a result, many accusations against her of "duplicity." Nevertheless Catherine was as iron on this point, and the anchor which was the sole protection of many lives from horrible tortures and death was not to be torn from its hold. Repeatedly we find men whose lives were in danger from this cause in the adjacent countries flying to Catherine for protection, and obtaining it. One of the most notable of these was Carnesecchi, a Florentine who, becoming one of the chief of the Protestant reformers in Italy, was pronounced by the Pope a "refractory heretic." Forced to fly for his life from Italy, he was protected by Catherine from the

[1] Clement VII. had largely altered this tradition; but Catherine had no respect for Clement VII., and did not agree with any of his ideas, though as a girl she had been forced to obey him.

wrath of the Pope; and when after a long residence in France he ventured to return to Florence, Catherine wrote to her kinsman, Cosimo I., urging him to protect Carnesecchi as she had done; the disregard of which recommendation resulted in Carnesecchi's being burnt in Rome by the Inquisition.[1]

The Peace of Beaulieu having once more brought a tranquil state of affairs, Catherine, who had inaugurated the reign of each of her other two sons by a *fête* at Chenonceaux, did the same in Henry III.'s case. That which she now held for him was on a more splendid scale than any which had taken place before, every effort being employed to make the occasion as joyous as possible, and with the hope that at last the miseries of war were at an end. But what we chiefly hear of in connection with the festivities are the extravagant follies of Henry. He received the guests dressed as a woman, with jewels in his hair, earrings in his ears, strings of pearls round his bared neck, an embroidered collar and high ruff; his youthful courtiers were arrayed in a similar manner, while by his desire the ladies of the court were attired as men, but with bare shoulders and flowing hair.

But the sunshine was only temporary, and the storm-clouds were soon again gathered over France. From the first the Guises had refused to be bound by the peace made at Beaulieu, as they declared it to be too favourable to the Protestants. They therefore now formed the celebrated "League"

[1] Chap. xxiv.

(with Henry, Duke of Guise, at its head) for the defence of the interests of the Roman Catholic party. This League had for its policy one the exact opposite of Catherine's, being formed to overturn her principle of a recognition by the State of two religions side by side in France; and while she laboured steadily to attain peace by means of this principle, the League strove to keep up a state of war until Protestantism should have been crushed, and was the cause of innumerable troubles to France during the next twenty years. The first result of the formation of the League was that the Guises were enabled so to manipulate the elections that the States-General when assembled consisted almost entirely of deputies opposed to the principle of the toleration of two religions; and on the 1st January 1577 this assembly declared themselves in favour of one religion only, and forced the King to abolish the "Edict of January." The Protestants at once took up arms, were assisted with money by Elizabeth of England, and the Sixth Religious War began. It lasted for nine months, but in September the principle of tolerating both religions was again agreed to, and a peace was made at Bergerac in September 1577.

Catherine was now approaching sixty years of age, and her appearance was very different from that which she had borne in the days of Henry II. Instead of the beautiful figure for which she had been so admired during all the earlier portion of her life in France, she was now immensely stout. But she still danced and rode, played games, and

excelled in shooting with the cross-bow. "Her complexion was fresh; 'she had not a wrinkle on her full round face,' which was set off by the long, black widow's veil she always wore, fastened back from her forehead and falling down upon her shoulders. This was for indoors; when she went out she put a little woollen hat upon the top of it. Had we met her, we should have probably thought her a jolly soul—a little inclined to be cynical. But we should have found her good company; colloquial in her speech, with vivid turns of expression."[1]

At times, however, she could blaze out as fiercely as Queen Elizabeth of England herself; but with more dignity. One who knew her well has said:—"She had these moods not seldom, even with the greatest Princes. . . . And at such times she was possessed by anger, and took a lofty tone. Nor was anything in the world so superb as she on such occasions; for her tongue spared the truth to no one." Her ability for business and power of concentration were marvellous. "Brantôme says that he watched her write twenty long letters in an afternoon. And on one of those uncomfortable journeys in a litter to which ladies were then subjected, she, unconscious of joltings and of stoppings, would read through ten pages of parchment—a dry *procès verbal*—'as if she were a lawyer or reporter,' without lifting her eyes till she had finished. Her style in writing is business-like and terse, illumined here and there by homely wit and racy phrase."[2]

[1] Miss Sichel's *The Later Years of Catherine de' Medici*, p. 256.
[2] *Idem.*

Perhaps nothing better shows Catherine's strong nature and entire freedom from all small-minded vanity than her tolerance of jokes against herself. When she heard that the Protestants called their biggest cannon *La Reine Mère* because it was so heavy and unwieldy that they could not move it—a joke which few ladies of stout figure would relish — she only laughed in the most good-humoured manner at the unflattering jest. "For that of her nature she was jovial, and loved a good repartee." A contemporary writer says:— "She was never gayer than when some one brought her a good satire against herself, the bitterer, ruder, coarser, the better. Once when she and the King of Navarre were standing in the window of a ground-floor room, they listened to two vagrants outside who were roasting a goose, and who, as they did so, talked loudly, telling ugly stories of the Queen, cursing her and giving her foul names for all the evil she had done to them. Whereupon the King of Navarre wished to take leave of her, intending to go and have them hanged. But she only called through the window to them: '*Hé!* What, after all, has she done to you? It is thanks to her that you have that goose to roast.'"[1]

In her letters to her son Henry she often displays the sadness of heart which came over her as she saw him more and more given up to follies, and surrounding himself with others more foolish than himself, whose advice he took instead of hers. She writes to him:—"Give orders for some one to tell me how your affairs are going. I do not ask this because I wish to control them, but because if

[1] *Histoire Universelle*, by I. A. d'Aubigné.

they go well my heart will be at ease, and if they go ill, I can help your trouble. . . . For you are my all, and whether or no you love me, you do not trust me as you ought. Forgive me if I speak straight out like this. I have no wish to live any longer. I have never cared for life since your father died, excepting as I might serve you and God." In another letter to him she says:—"And this is my request, that you will publish anew the ordinance forbidding swearing and blaspheming, . . . and will punish those who do not keep it, . . . and firmly resolve not to give either bishopric, or any benefice with the cure of souls, excepting to learned men of good life."[1]

In August 1578, hostilities again threatening to break out, Catherine (her son, Henry III., having none of the gift which she possessed for reconciling hostile parties) set out on a prolonged tour through the south of France in order to prevent war if possible, the first of those wonderful "journeys of pacification" in which she was engaged during the greater part of the next three years. To Bellièvre, her Intendant of Finance, she writes:—

"It seems to me that one ought to quit everything else, and to employ every means to avert the storm of war. I am determined not to return until I see peace. . . . But if God gives me grace to fulfil my desires I hope that this kingdom will feel the good of my labours, and that enduring peace will reign there."[2]

One gazes in astonishment at this woman of

[1] *Lettres de Catherine de Medicis.*
[2] *Idem.*

sixty, hampered by bodily infirmities and the difficulties of travel at that period in France, and confronted by such apparently insuperable obstacles in the irreconcilable temper towards each other of the two hostile parties, resolutely setting forth (notwithstanding that it was an acute pain to her to thus absent herself from the son whom she adored) determined to overcome all difficulties, to carry out the motto she had chosen when a girl of fifteen, and to "bring serenity" to her adopted country; and displaying a power of endurance, and an ability to win success even under the most adverse conditions, which have extorted admiration even from those most prejudiced against her. For example, Miss Sichel says:—

"It is impossible not to admire the indomitable spirit with which, as she grew older, she pursued her object in the face of every hardship, every obstacle. Between 1578 and 1581 she knew no repose. Driven by her purpose, she was continually traversing France, amidst perils and discomforts unimaginable. So heavy in person that motion meant suffering, she was always on the move; so rheumatic that acute pain was chronic, she uncomplainingly braved every kind of climate. Now she was carried in her litter under a burning sun; now she was snowed up for weeks, amid all the bodily privations and the difficulties of getting provisions that winter in the country then signified."[1]

The provinces to which Catherine chiefly turned her attention in this attempt to prevent war were Guienne, Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiné. She received no encouragement from those around

[1] Miss Sichel's *The Later Years of Catherine de' Medici*, p. 313.

her in regard to the task upon which she was bent. All thought, and said, that it was a hopeless endeavour, the hatred between the two factions having grown so implacable, and that she was attempting the impossible. Nevertheless she managed to bring about a conference between the two opposing parties, and so successful was she in allaying their mutual feelings of enmity that she ended by getting articles of agreement which placed the two religions on an equal footing drawn up and signed by both sides at Nérac in February 1579; and war was once more averted.

Catherine's satisfaction at her success was naturally considerable. To the Duchesse d'Uzès she says (in another letter): "You have understood me, and I you, for more than forty years of kindly memories." And to this lifelong friend she now writes:—

"I have finished my labours here, and in my humble opinion have made a great many persons to lie; for I have achieved that which was said to be impossible."

But there were other provinces still to be visited where the difficulties were even greater. Thus in coming to Montpelier she approached a city which was on the verge of an appeal to arms, and known to be inimical to her personally. She writes to her son:—

"I walked the whole length of the city walls and reached the gate, which I found guarded by arquebusiers, as I had been told. But that did not prevent me from going on fearlessly, without showing dread or mistrust, although they were all so near my coach (especially as the road there

is narrow) that the butts of their arquebuses nearly touched my carriage. The Consuls in their red robes and their caps, together with a great crowd of people of both religions who followed them, came to meet me with all humility, offering you and me their property and lives, with all the devotion of loyal subjects; and both parties promised me on their honour to live according to my commands. When I got nearly opposite the gate another great crowd of people came out of the town, all showing a more friendly feeling than I had been led to expect. The fact that I had gone among them so freely helped a good deal, I am told, to increase their confidence, and also their certainty that peace was near. . . . I thought to have managed to sleep here yesterday, so as to escape the risk of the plague by making one day's journey, getting earlier to Provence; but I felt rather tired, as I did full six leagues among the rocks of this district before my dinner."[1]

In the recent troubles every church in the town had been destroyed, except one. And this had become a bone of contention. The Protestants claimed half of it; the Roman Catholics refused to worship under the same roof, and claimed the whole building. She got them to refer the knotty point to her, and, after much acrid discussion, arranged an amicable settlement.

In this manner Catherine travelled hither and thither, smoothing difficulties, overcoming obstacles deliberately contrived to frustrate her purpose, producing smiles where she had been met with frowns, and settling innumerable disputes. Last

[1] *Lettres de Catherine de Medicis.*

of all she reached Dauphiné, regarding which province she writes to the Duchesse d'Uzès:—

"Here I am in your land of Dauphiné, the hilliest and most aggravating in which I have hitherto been. Every day there is cold, heat, rain, fine weather, hail. And the characters of the people here are just the same. But God, who leads me, is bringing me to my goal, . . . and in ten days I shall be in my beloved France and in the city where is the dearest thing I have in the world. Report says that you govern him; keep me in his good graces; and tell d'Écars that since she has sat next to him at dinner I am sure he no longer wishes to die."[1]

Again to the same friend she writes:—

"Were it not for the plague, I would bring you news of your estate, but all the neighbourhood round Uzès is so very much infected that they say even the birds flying past it fall dead. This has made me take the other road, between the lakes and the sea; and there we had to sleep two nights in tents, camping thus in the service of my King, whom I long to see again in good health. As for me, mine is good, excepting that Porte-Sainte-Marie has given me a troublesome catarrh, which, at the moment, has turned to sciatica. However, this does not prevent my walking; not very well, though, so that I am forced to have a little mule to ride upon occasions. I think that the King would laugh if he saw me on it, looking so exactly like the Maréchal de Cossé.[2] But if one goes on living, one must grow old, and truly one is very lucky not to feel it more. *You* have to ride in a carrying chair, *I* upon a mule, because

[1] *Lettres de Catherine de Medicis.*
[2] Proverbial for his stout and unwieldy figure.

I like to travel farther than you do. Tell me that I shall be welcome when I return."[1]

At length her task was accomplished; peace had been created for a time in Guienne, Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiné. But scarcely had she returned with a joyful heart to Paris when similar troubles began in the north, and she had to set forth again on a journey in December into Picardy; where also she succeeded for a time in averting war.

But the two religious parties had not yet learnt to live at peace together. Their adherents could never refrain for long from insulting each other's religion, thereby provoking brawls which quickly developed into open war: and in this conduct the Protestants were not a whit behind their opponents, while they had always a strong tendency to invoke foreign aid, a course which enlisted against them every one who had a patriotic feeling for France. As before, therefore, this inherent animosity again produced its natural result, and in March 1580 the Seventh Religious War began. After continuing for eight months this war was brought to an end in November by the Peace of Fleix, the terms of which were almost exactly the same as the agreement which Catherine had got the two parties to sign at Nérac.

This peace, joined to the exhausted state of France, created by wars which had continued almost incessantly for fourteen years, now caused a cessation of the contest for four years (1581-1585); though during these years there were from

[1] *Lettres de Catherine de Medicis.*

time to time local conflicts in different parts of France, while the state of general disorder into which the country had been brought by this long and bitter struggle was deplorable. In June 1584 Catherine's fourth son, the Duc d'Alençon, died, which, as Louise de Vaudemont had no children, left Henry of Navarre the next heir to the throne. Catherine's many sorrows, disappointments, and bereavements began to weigh heavily upon her. She writes about this time :—

"I am so much accustomed never to have an unspoiled joy that it does not seem so strange to me as it would to another. . . . That God will be pitiful to me who have lost so many; that He will not let me see any more of them die: that is what I pray of His mercy, and that He will allow me to depart, as befits my age." [1]

Catherine de' Medici praying that because so many of her dear ones are gone she may depart this life as befits her age, is certainly not the picture of her which has been painted for us by a long succession of writers. Yet these are her own written words, unearthed after three centuries by the patient labour of an age which seeks to base its knowledge of history on more sure foundations than those which sufficed for previous times.

In July 1585 the operations of the League caused the commencement of the Eighth Religious War (sometimes called the War of the Three Henrys) between Henry III., Henry of Navarre, and the League, under Henry, Duke of Guise.[2]

[1] *Lettres de Catherine de Medicis.*

[2] Called "Le Balafré," from a scar on the left cheek received in battle.

Catherine was now sixty-six years old, and was wearied with this long struggle to create peace; nevertheless, before this war began she took a toilsome journey into Champagne to endeavour to induce Guise to keep from war; but without avail. About this time also she became so disgusted with the follies of Henry III., and the persistency with which he insisted on invariably choosing the most ill-advised courses of action, that she removed from the Louvre, and gave up taking any part in public affairs. We read of her ordering her attendants to carry her "chair" outside the city walls and to put her down for a while in the green fields, that she might, amid the quiet peace of country scenes, gain some rest of mind and allay her utter weariness of spirit at the political condition of the country and her son's refusal to listen to her advice.

But Catherine had adopted France as her country, and notwithstanding the long abuse she had endured from the French, was as intensely national as if born a Frenchwoman. And when she saw one third of the kingdom occupied by the troops of the League, another third by those of Henry of Navarre, a German army also invading the country, and France threatened with complete dismemberment, she came forth from her retirement to make one more effort to save the country and her son's throne. War now raged over the whole of France, but Catherine, though she was by this time sixty-eight, set out on the last of her many journeys in the cause of peace, one which required no little courage, and, travelling through a large part of France which was in revolt from

her son, held a meeting with Henry of Navarre near Cognac. This, however, produced only partial results, while news of the alarming state of affairs in Paris, created by the machinations of the League, necessitated her hurrying back to the capital. On her way thither she heard at Mort, in February 1587, of Elizabeth of England having had Mary, Queen of Scots, executed,[1] that daughter-in-law to whom Catherine had set Latin exercises, and of whom she had written twenty-eight years before that she "had only to smile to turn all Frenchmen's heads." Elizabeth had put Mary to death because she was a dangerous rival to her throne, and on account of the plots against herself of which Mary had become the centre. If it did not cross Catherine's own mind it must have crossed the minds of others that Elizabeth's position in the matter was exactly that in which Catherine had been placed in December 1560 with regard to the Prince of Condé, and yet that she had not acted as Elizabeth had done, even though she would have had more excuse, since she had merely to allow (as she was strongly pressed to do) a sentence of death already passed against him by others to take effect.

On arrival in Paris Catherine found a revolutionary government installed there, which, prompted by the League, was intriguing with Spain both to seize the King and also to make over Boulogne to Philip II. in order to assist the Armada which he was preparing for the invasion of England. However, these plans were eventually foiled, and after a time Henry III. was able to leave Paris

[1] She was executed on 18th February 1587.

in command of an army to attack the Germans and expel them from France.

The war continued during the rest of the year 1587, but at length, in February 1588, a sort of peace was patched up between Henry III. and the Duke of Guise. Paris, however, was entirely on the side of the latter, and on the verge of revolution; the King therefore ordered Guise not to come to the capital. This order he disobeyed, pretending not to have understood it, and entered the city on the 9th May, being received in the streets with the usual shouts of "One religion." The King was urged by those around him to have Guise assassinated on his leaving the Louvre, and had determined on doing so; but at the interview between the King and Guise, Catherine, suddenly seeing what her son contemplated, took him aside and spoke to him so forcibly that he allowed Guise (who on entering the Louvre had wondered if he should leave the palace alive) to depart unharmed. Three days later Paris rose in revolt on behalf of Guise and the League; barricades were quickly erected, cutting off the different quarters of the royal troops from each other, the Swiss troops were forced to surrender, and the King, with his wife Louise and his mother, protected by a very small force, were besieged in the Louvre. Henry III.'s cause seemed ruined, and Catherine must have felt that it was chiefly his own fault, through the many follies he had committed. We are told that as the King, the Queen, and the Queen Mother sat at dinner on the evening that this revolution took place, Catherine, "while her son

sat unmoved, silently shed great tears throughout the entire repast."[1] However, next day Henry managed to escape from the Louvre, and fled from Paris, leaving his mother to see what she could do by her well-known gift for reconciliation. Issuing from the Louvre almost unaccompanied Catherine went to seek the Duke of Guise. Her journey across the city was a difficult operation. The streets were everywhere blocked by barricades, and at each of these it was necessary to induce those who guarded them to allow her to pass and to make an opening for her sedan chair. But though the Leaguers were in open rebellion she induced them to do so, "all heads being uncovered to the Queen Mother." Nothing could show better than this the influence which Catherine (once so despised by the French people) had in thirty years gained among them. As so often before, she was successful in assuaging the angry passions raging; and though everything was against her she succeeded in getting Guise to accompany her to Chartres, where the King was, and in arranging terms of peace, though the latter practically left Guise all-powerful in the kingdom (11th July 1588). Within a fortnight after this peace was made in France the Spanish Armada appeared off the coast of Cornwall, and the great ten days' naval battle between Spain and England began in which the maritime power of Spain was utterly destroyed.

But peace was not yet to come to France; and round Catherine's death-bed the storm was

[1] *Recit d'un Bourgeois de Paris,* by Dupuy.

still to rage. Henry III. was now determined to assassinate Guise, but, remembering what had taken place before, carefully kept his design from his mother. Catherine, worn out by so many labours and anxieties, was by this time in a dying condition, and removed to Blois, that fortified château on the Loire which Francis I. had so greatly improved and enlarged. Thither in October the King summoned the States-General to assemble; and there, on the 23rd December 1588, Henry carried out his plot to rid himself of the Duke of Guise.

In the great northern wing, built by Francis I., and affording such a splendid example of French Renaissance architecture, Catherine in her richly decorated range of apartments lay dying. Close by rose the wonderful outside staircase, the *escalier à jour*,[1] which more than fifty years back she had so often seen thronged by the laughing groups of the Petite Bande; but a very different atmosphere now pervaded the castle of Blois, and the gloom of tragedy and death overshadowed the abode which Francis had delighted to see brightened with the smiles of beauty and resounding with laughter and the sallies of wit. Catherine's apartments were on the first floor, while the King occupied the suite of apartments on the floor above; and he had warned all in the plot, on pain of death, not to allow the Queen Mother to know what was going on. The murder was secretly debated by the King and Council after the manner of an execution. It was to be carried out by the "Forty-

[1] Said to have been designed for Francis by Leonardo da Vinci from the model of a spiral shell.

five," the band of gentlemen which Henry had formed as his personal bodyguard; some of the band were placed in the King's bedchamber, and some in the passage outside it. The Duke of Guise, who had received intimation that there was a plot on foot, but would not attend to the warning, being summoned from the council chamber to speak with the King in his cabinet, was attacked as he went thither by the members of the "Forty-five" stationed for that purpose, and fell dead on the floor of the King's bedchamber. Henry III. at once descended to his mother's apartments, and, entering the room where she lay ill, announced to her what he had done, saying that now at last he felt secure on his throne. Catherine, knowing what the vengeance of the League would be, and how this deed would again set light to the fires of war, but too ill to attempt any longer to guide the vessel amidst so many breakers, told him he was much mistaken and would live to repent his act.[1] Weak as she was, she dragged herself from her bed and went to visit the old Cardinal Bourbon in the prison to which he had been consigned by the King's orders; but he only greeted her with the old cry that all these misfortunes were the result of her policy of tolerating two religions. The injustice of these reproaches, combined with distress of mind on account of the troubles she correctly foresaw would be the result of her son's deed, threw her into a high fever, and on returning from the interview, she took to her bed never to rise from it again. And a few days later, on the

[1] As a consequence of this deed Henry III. was himself murdered by the League six months afterwards.

5th January 1589, Catherine de' Medici ended her long and storm-tossed life. She was three months short of seventy years of age when she died.

Two women attended her affectionately throughout her illness, and were with her to the last—her much-loved daughter-in-law, Louise de Vaudemont, and her favourite granddaughter, Christine of Lorraine.[1] To the former Catherine left as a parting gift her beloved château of Chenonceaux—a solid boon to Louise, who on her husband's death shortly afterwards was left very badly off. Catherine during her lifetime had erected in St Denis a double monument for Henry II. and herself; but when she died the war which at once broke out again on the murder of the Duke of Guise did not permit of her body being removed thither, and she was buried temporarily in the chapel at Blois. But in 1609, at the entreaty of the Duchess of Angoulême, who had always liked Catherine, her remains were removed by Henry IV. to St Denis, and buried by the side of her husband. The monument over them consists of the two recumbent figures of Henry II. and Catherine, lying on a bronze couch.

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The character of Catherine de' Medici as it stands revealed to us by the fuller information we now possess, and divested of that cloud of mystery, fable, and misrepresentation which has so long been gathered round it by partisan writers, is not difficult to unravel. That which is its salient

[1] *See* p. 109.

feature is the extraordinary way in which (though always suffering abuse as an "Italian") she threw herself heart and soul into the cause of France, and amidst difficulties, dangers, and discouragements enough to have made the stoutest heart abandon the effort in despair, laboured from the age of forty-two to that of seventy to bring peace to a country devastated by a succession of vindictive wars. Thus one of those Venetian ambassadors who have so often formed our guides in this study of her life, calls her "the great moderatress"; while the highest authority has said of her that "she was an indefatigable worker in the cause of peace in her adopted country."[1]

In the previous history of Catherine's family we have seen that one of their chief characteristics was a unique gift for abating strife, and making those who were at feud lay aside their enmity and live at peace. It was their special talent in this respect which had helped them to rise, and had made their rule of Florence so successful. And in Catherine this family characteristic comes out in even stronger degree than in any of her ancestors. Again and again — at Orleans, at Roussillon, at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, at Beaulieu, at Nérac, at Fleix, at Chartres, and on many other occasions — she proved her peculiar gift for pouring oil on troubled waters and getting bitter foes to make peace. This is the chief characteristic which she shows during the thirty years of her widowhood. The other qualities which she possessed have been successively indicated by the facts of her life as we have followed her long and harassed career from

[1] *The Cambridge Modern History*, vol. iii. chap. i.

her childhood in the Medici Palace in Florence to her death at gloom-darkened Blois.

And if any indication of character is afforded (as it is) by the persons whom an individual has chiefly liked through life, then it is not without significance that, omitting her husband and children, the persons of whom, at different times in her life, we find Catherine chiefly fond—nay more, the only persons of whom we hear that she was specially fond—are the nuns at the Murate, Maria Salviati, Elizabeth of Austria, and above all Louise de Vaudemont, the three latter all of them women who in a corrupt age were like shining lights in a dark sky.[1] Nor, again, is it without significance that so many notable Protestants should have owed their lives to her, such as Condé, Navarre, De l'Hôpital, Aldobrandini, Carnesecchi, and others; or that one who (in the circumstances of France) had special reason to dread making unnecessary foes, should yet have endured the wrath of the Pope and the King of Spain rather than ever permit the Inquisition to be established in the country she ruled. These things, together with the fact that the two murders of which she has in former days been accused are now acknowledged to have been unjustly laid at her door, necessitate a very different view of the character of Catherine de' Medici from that which has been handed down to us by the biassed historians of an age of bitter conflict, and has so long provided material for the writers of sensational fiction.

[1] We may well ask whether it is likely that persons like Louise de Vaudemont would have been fond of Catherine if the latter had been keeping a poison cupboard in the apartments in which Louise nursed her. See also chap. xxvi. p. 345.

It has already been remarked[1] that to those who start from the basis that she was "a villain" Catherine de' Medici will always be an enigma. To look at her with affection is impossible; one might as well feel affection for a hundred-ton gun. On the other hand, those who regard her "with hatred"[2] are not those who can draw a true picture of her; inevitably, under such auspices, stories long since discarded by history are given more or less credit, points which tell against her are painted in unduly strong colours, and those which tell in her favour are belittled and robbed of any weight by the manner in which they are put, until a figure is produced which is an incongruous impossibility, and which has to be declared an "enigma" and a "paradox." Those only will understand Catherine de' Medici who will look at her with a calm dispassionateness.

If, then, we may neither hate nor love, what remains? Admiration for strength, for great ability, for untiring energy, for a self-control which has seldom been equalled, for a wisdom beyond her time (enabling her to see that the only policy which can give peace to a country whose people have taken up opposite views in religion is that of causing different religious bodies to learn to live side by side without conflict), for steadfast determination to do the best for France, for persevering endeavour, through countless discouragements, to be a peacemaker. These are the things, confessed even by her enemies, which we are to admire in Catherine de' Medici; and each fresh record brought to light shows more clearly that they are justly to be attributed to her. She

[1] Page 6. [2] Page 60.

did not succeed: but she splendidly tried. And it is certain that where she did not succeed none other of her time would have done so; for neither in Germany, England, or Flanders was it found possible to prevent the forces let loose by the Reformation from resulting in similar conflicts. While in none of those countries was the attempt made, as it *was* made in France, to attain that mutual toleration which all countries have since found is the only sound policy.

We have surveyed the task; and we have seen the effort which Catherine made to cope with it. Sectarian partisans may continue to battle over her conduct, but the point on which the historian will fix his eye is:—Did Catherine, amidst the terrible woes which came upon the French people through the birth of a new form of religion, by her actions increase those woes, or did she diminish them? This is the sole issue upon which history, as distinguished from religious controversy, will fix its attention and will judge her. And on this issue there is no doubt at all what the verdict will be; in fact it has already been pronounced. Her splendid fight for a hitherto unheard-of principle (that two religions should be allowed to exist, each recognised by the State) was a fight to bring peace to France by what we all now know to be the only means by which peace in such matters can be either obtained or preserved. And, beginning from her three magnificent efforts in the year 1561 by this means to prevent France from drifting into civil war, down to the seventh and last occasion when she brought about peace for a time by the

same means, Catherine at each juncture did the most that any one could do to prevent, or to allay, the miseries of France. And just so far as she obtained pauses in the conflict (some of them lasting for several years) did she assuage and diminish the sufferings which that conflict created. With the result that the name given her by the leading modern authority on the subject, in summing up her character and work, is that of "*an indefatigable peacemaker.*" And with that verdict the whole issue regarding her conduct is conclusively given in her favour.

Upon this last scion of Cosimo's branch devolved a task severer far than had fallen to the lot of any of her family who had gone before. Even that of her ancestor, Cosimo Pater Patriae, pales before that which fell upon the shoulders of his last descendant, the baby-girl upon whom in her cradle Cardinal Giulio had looked down in the almost empty Medici Palace, and round whose path he wove so many thorny briars.

# PART II

## PART II

We have done with that elder branch of the family which in the course of a hundred and ninety years, beginning from the humble position they occupied in the time of Giovanni di Bicci, in the second generation had created a new epoch for Florence, in the fourth had directed the politics of all Italy, in the fifth had swayed the destinies of Europe, and in the seventh had seated its last descendant on the throne of a Queen of France, and governed that country through thirty years of a most troubled time. We have now to turn to the descendants of Giovanni di Bicci's second son, that younger branch which carried on the succession after the death of Alessandro, gained the crown which the achievements of the elder branch had made possible, and which had been the long dream of Giulio de' Medici, and after ruling over Tuscany for two hundred years, brought the family to an end in 1743.

Beginning with Lorenzo, the brother of Cosimo Pater Patriae, there are of this younger branch four generations before we reach that which succeeded to the rule of Tuscany after the death of Alessandro. And while the first and second of these have scarcely any separate history from that of the elder branch, with the third and fourth

generations it is otherwise; these have an independent history of their own, particularly in the case of Giovanni and his wife, Catherine Sforza, and their celebrated son, Giovanni delle Bande Nere. But although the consideration of their history involves retracing our steps, it has the compensating advantage that the story of their lives often throws a sidelight on that of the elder branch. The time of Giovanni and Catherine Sforza is contemporary with that of Lorenzo the Magnificent, Pietro the Unfortunate, and the "Interregnum"; and the time of Giovanni delle Bande Nere with that of Leo X. and Clement VII. Lastly, the reigns of Cosimo I. and his son Francis I. are contemporaneous with the long life of Catherine de' Medici.

LORENZO, BROTHER OF COSIMO PATER PATRIAE (LORENZO THE ELDER).
By Bronzino.

*Alinari* *Uffizi Gallery.*

# CHAPTER XXI

## LORENZO (THE ELDER)

*Born* 1395. *Died* 1440.

LORENZO,[1] the second son of Giovanni di Bicci, generally called Lorenzo the Elder to distinguish him from his grandson of the same name,[2] took no part in that public life which formed the chief occupation of his brother Cosimo. He was of a retiring disposition, without ambition or taste for public affairs, and was content to be a humble assistant to his more capable elder brother, and to confine himself to the banking concerns of the family. He shared in the banishment of 1433, and in the triumphant return of 1434, and lived for six years after that event, dying in 1440. He thus lived long enough to see his brother exercising the chief influence in the State, though not to see all the subsequent developments of the remaining twenty-four years of Cosimo's strenuous life. We see him in Benozzo Gozzoli's picture in the Medici chapel, riding by Cosimo's side on a mule; and the mutual attitude of the two brothers is undoubtedly correctly represented. Lorenzo married Ginevra Cavalcanti, and left one son, Pier Francesco, who was about twenty-five years old when his father died.

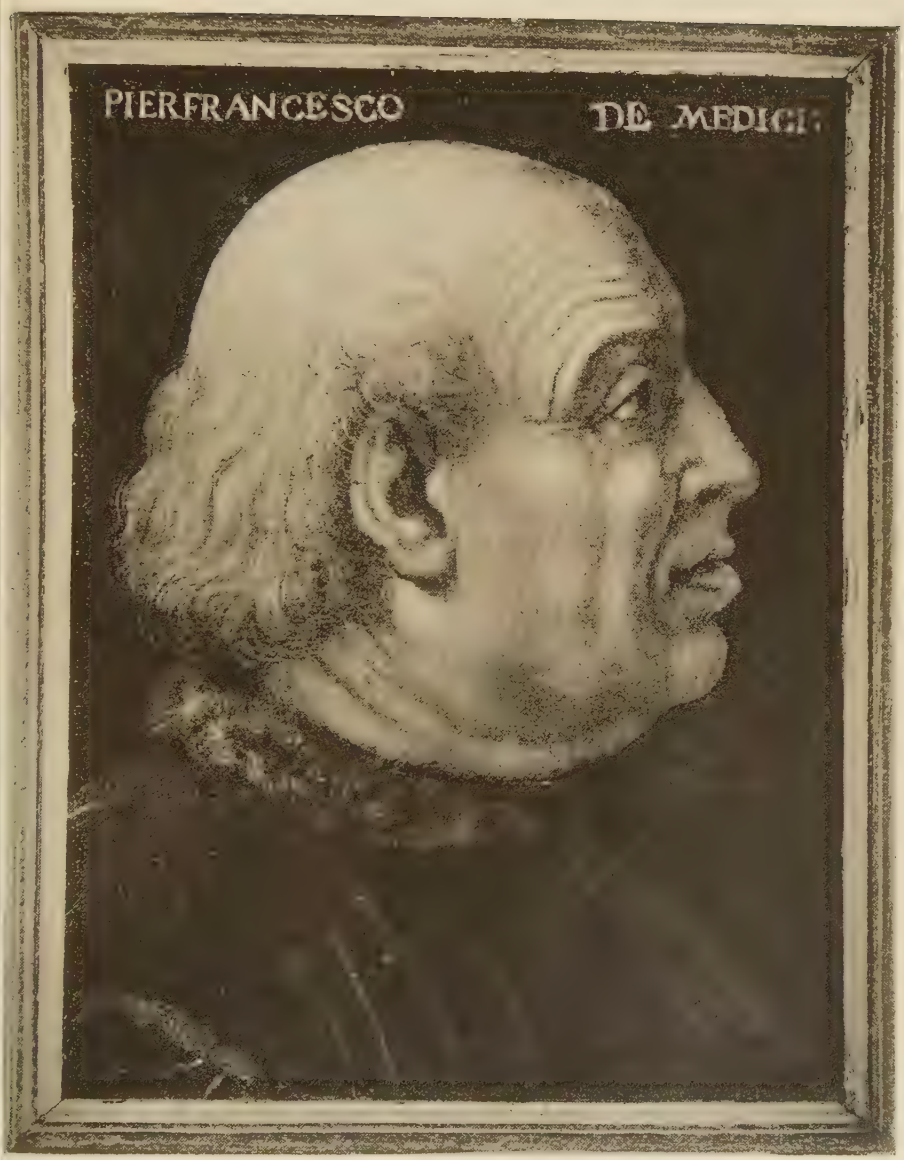
[1] Plate XLII. [2] *See* Appendix I.

## PIER FRANCESCO (THE ELDER)

*Born* 1415. *Died* 1476.

Pier Francesco,[1] son of Lorenzo, generally called Pier Francesco the Elder to distinguish him from his grandson of the same name,[2] was eighteen when the family were banished, and he accompanied his father in their exile to Venice. In the following year they returned, and in a short time his uncle Cosimo became the chief power in the State; while the death of his father six years later left Pier Francesco head of his branch of the family. Like his father, he preferred a retired life; and though his share of the family wealth, divided between them in 1453, was nearly as great as that of his uncle Cosimo, he lived very quietly, taking little part in public affairs, and confining himself to the banking business of the family. Nor did he nourish any jealousy towards his uncle Cosimo and his cousins, Piero and Giovanni, on account of the more exalted position they had come to occupy in the State. He was fifty when Cosimo Pater Patriae died, and he survived his cousin, Piero il Gottoso, seeing the first seven years of the rule of the latter's son, Lorenzo the Magnificent. Pier Francesco died in 1476 at the age of sixty-one. He married somewhat late in life Laudomia Acciajoli, and left two sons, Lorenzo and Giovanni, aged respectively thirteen and nine when their father died. None of this younger branch possessed the financial talent which distinguished the elder branch, so that their wealth,

[1] Plate XLIII. [2] *See* Appendix I.




PIER FRANCESCO, SON OF LORENZO (PIER FRANCESCO THE ELDER).
By Bronzino.

*Alinari* [*Uffizi Gallery.*

instead of increasing, gradually diminished; but nevertheless Pier Francesco at his death left his two sons very rich. Bronzino's portrait of him (Plate XLIII.) is taken from Filippino Lippi's picture of the *Adoration of the Magi*, painted for Pier Francesco's younger son, Giovanni, in 1496; in which picture Pier Francesco and his son Giovanni are introduced in the same way as Cosimo Pater Patriae, his sons, and grandsons had been in Botticelli's picture on the same subject painted thirty years before for Piero il Gottoso.[1]

## LORENZO (THE YOUNGER)

### COMMONLY CALLED LORENZO "POPOLANO"

*Born* 1463. *Died* 1507.

Lorenzo the Younger[2] and his brother Giovanni, the two sons of Pier Francesco the Elder,[3] failed to continue the attitude towards the elder branch of the family which had been maintained by their father and grandfather. Their father died while they were still boys, and by the time that they were grown up their second cousin, Lorenzo the Magnificent, had created for himself and his branch of the family a position in Italy of such weight and importance that it resembled that of a sovereign ruler; he was entertaining as an equal the rulers of other states, his children were making exalted marriages, and the whole life of the elder branch was quite different from that of the younger. All this created much jealousy in the minds of the

[1] Vol. i. p. 176.

[2] No portrait exists of Lorenzo di Pier Francesco (Lorenzo the Younger).

[3] *See* Appendix I.

younger branch, who found themselves occupying a very inferior position to their cousins, and they consequently began to exhibit a marked coldness towards the latter. It was in order to allay this feeling that Lorenzo the Magnificent brought about the engagement of his daughter Maria to Giovanni, the younger of the two brothers; but this match was unfortunately prevented from taking place owing to her death in 1487. Lorenzo the Magnificent, however, managed to keep this jealousy from growing stronger so long as he lived, and it did not come to a head until after his death in 1492. Nor did the younger branch fail to participate to some extent in the general exaltation of the family. For in January 1493 we find Isabella d'Este, Marchioness of Mantua, in a letter to her sister Beatrice, mentioning Lorenzo, son of Pier Francesco, as one of the four sponsors of her lately-born daughter; and saying that his brother Giovanni had come to Mantua to represent Lorenzo at the baptism of the child.

Soon after this the two brothers became so incensed against their cousin Pietro the Unfortunate that the jealousy they had long nourished against the elder branch was no longer restrained, and they became, as already noted, chiefly instrumental in rousing the ill feeling against him which culminated in the banishment of the elder branch in 1494; we are told that it was principally owing to their representations that Charles VIII. turned aside from Pisa, and instead of taking the coast road thence to Rome, advanced upon Florence. This conduct of theirs, together with their adopt-

ing for a time the name of "Popolano" and erasing the family arms from their palace, was never forgiven by the elder branch.

After the elder branch had been thus driven out, Lorenzo, who was a man of very mediocre abilities, became (as the reward for his conduct towards the elder branch of his family) a member of the Government. But the position only served to demonstrate his want of any capacity, and he was merely one among other nonentities who nominally ruled Florence while all the real power was wielded by Savonarola.

And this was undoubtedly the reason why the Pope was able so easily to create a party in Florence antagonistic to Savonarola,[1] and possessing the power to bring him to disaster. Men of the mental calibre of Lorenzo, composing nominally the ruling body of the State, but being thrust into the background by the more able character of Savonarola, resented this and nourished a jealousy of him which made them ready to become the Pope's instruments in order to get rid of him.

Lorenzo and Giovanni took in regard to Savonarola an exactly similar course to that which they had adopted in the case of their cousin Pietro, fanning the ill-feeling against the dominant Prior of San Marco, and endeavouring to derive advantage for themselves by heading the party who were being made use of by the Pope to destroy him. And it appears to have been at their instigation[2] that the attack was made on

[1] Vol. i. p. 346.

[2] Lorenzo's brother Giovanni, then on his way from Forlì to Pisa (chap. xxii. p. 200), appears to have taken part with his brother in this matter, as he is mentioned as being the principal instigator of the attack on San Marco.

San Marco which resulted in Savonarola's imprisonment and death. These two brothers are therefore flagrantly associated with one of the most disgraceful episodes in Florentine history; their conduct being all the more to be condemned because they took the ignoble part of instigators to the more prominent actors, they themselves keeping to a large extent out of sight.

Upon his brother Giovanni's death in 1498 Lorenzo appropriated the latter's estate of Castello (three miles from Florence), though it really belonged to the child of a few months old whom his brother had left. He pretended to hold the property as the representative of this child, but, in view of the serious difficulties with the Pope in which the child's mother, Catherine Sforza, had become involved,[1] never intended to surrender it.

Lorenzo's whole conduct with regard to his nephew and the latter's mother, Catherine Sforza, displayed the same meanness of character which he had shown by his action in bringing about the banishment of the elder branch of his family in order to gratify an ignoble jealousy, and by his conduct in becoming one of the Pope's tools for the destruction of Savonarola. He was, however, eventually punished. When his sister-in-law was unexpectedly released from her imprisonment and came to settle in Florence, Lorenzo, much to his disgust, had to surrender to her the custody of her son and the villa of Castello. He had embezzled a large part of the boy's inheritance, and dreaded this being discovered; and the manœuvres he adopted to prevent it showed his

[1] Chap. xxii. pp. 203-207.

character.[1] The lawsuit which followed disclosed what he had done; and the shame of the discovery, together with the mortification at having failed in his object, brought on an illness which caused his death. He died in 1507, at the age of forty-four.

Unlike his brother Giovanni, Lorenzo does not appear to have been to any great extent a patron of art. It is said that Botticelli's drawings illustrating Dante's *Divine Comedy* were executed for him; and Vasari says that one of Michelangelo's early works, "a little St John," was made for him. He is, however, remarkable as being the only male member of both branches of the Medici family of whom no portrait appears ever to have been painted; and this could scarcely have been the case had he been even to a moderate degree a patron of art. He married Semiramide d'Appiano, and left three sons and two daughters.

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Pier Francesco the Younger.

Lorenzo's eldest son, Pier Francesco the Younger, was a man of even less note than his father. Almost the only thing recorded of him is his active co-operation with his father in the attempt to rob the boy Giovanni, the son of Giovanni "Popolano" and Catherine Sforza, of his inheritance. Pier Francesco took much interest in the minor arts, especially in pottery. From his father he inherited the estate of Cafaggiolo, and there he founded the Cafaggiolo manufactory which soon became famous, the Cafaggiolo-ware being considered to surpass even that of Faenza.

[1] Chap. xxii. pp. 210-211.

He married Maria Soderini, and was the father of Lorenzino,[1] Maddalena, and Laudomia.[2] Pier Francesco died while his son Lorenzino was still a boy.

Plate of Cafaggiolo-ware supposed to represent Pier Francesco and his wife Maria Soderini, and to have been a wedding gift to them on their marriage in 1511 from the manufactory which Pier Francesco had founded.

[1] Born in 1515.

[2] Vol. i. pp. 506-507.

# CHAPTER XXII

## GIOVANNI "POPOLANO" AND CATHERINE SFORZA

### GIOVANNI

*Born* 1467. *Died* 1498.

Giovanni,[1] the second son of Pier Francesco the Elder, is said to have been one of the handsomest and most accomplished of the Florentines of his day. He was eleven years old at the time of the Pazzi Conspiracy, and all his youth was passed in the midst of the splendour of the rule of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and when he was nineteen he was engaged to the latter's daughter Maria, who, however, died before the marriage took place. When Lorenzo the Magnificent died in 1492 Giovanni was twenty-five; and in the following year we find him visiting the court of Mantua in great style at the baptism of Isabella d'Este's daughter. After the leading part which he and his brother Lorenzo took in the banishment of the elder branch of the family, Giovanni took service with the King of France, and was given by Charles VIII. a post with an annual salary of two thousand crowns; but this did not last long, as in 1496 he was appointed by the Florentine Republic as their ambassador to Catherine Sforza, the masterful Countess of Forlì.

[1] Plate XLIV.

At Forlì Giovanni soon made himself highly popular, and after a short time the Countess of Forlì (whose political position made it almost imperative that she should marry again) showed so much admiration for her handsome and accomplished Florentine envoy that some began to say that she intended to marry him. Nevertheless it was thought by most to be very unlikely that so great a personage would marry one so much beneath her in rank, and only a simple citizen. It was true that under Lorenzo the Magnificent the family had attained a great position, but with his death and the exile of the elder branch of the Medici all their importance had passed away. The future Pope Leo X. was at that time merely a wandering member of a banished family, and all the subsequent developments of that family were undreamt of. However, eventually Giovanni's various attractions prevailed, and in 1497, to the disgust of both Milan and Venice, Catherine Sforza, Countess of Forlì and Imola, married Giovanni de' Medici, called in Florence Giovanni "Popolano." He was then thirty, and she thirty-five. It was by far the most exalted marriage which any member of the Medici family had up to that time made.[1]

Giovanni had much fondness for art, and being both accomplished and wealthy was able to gratify his artistic tastes to the utmost. The sack of the Medici Palace in 1494 had filled Florence with art treasures[2] which those who had plundered them

[1] The marriage of Giuliano (Duc de Nemours) to the aunt of the King of France did not take place until eighteen years later.

[2] Vol. i. pp. 320-321.

PLATE XLIV.

GIOVANNI, SON OF PIER FRANCESCO.
By Vasari.

*Alinari*] [*Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.*

were anxious to sell; and Giovanni was able by this means to adorn his villa of Castello with many of the treasures of art which had belonged to the elder branch. Among other artists he patronised in particular Botticelli and Filippino Lippi. We have seen how in 1496 the latter painted for him one of his finest pictures, his *Adoration of the Magi*, now in the Uffizi Gallery. And the anonymous writer who is quoted by the "Anonimo Gaddiano" tells us that Botticelli painted for Giovanni in his villa of Castello various beautiful pictures. We do not know what these were, but the language used by the writer in question seems to imply that they were frescoes.[1]

Giovanni only survived his marriage a little more than a year. In 1498 he accompanied his stepson, Ottaviano Riario, to Pisa as his guardian and guide in commanding a body of troops; he got ill at Pisa, and, becoming no better, proceeded to the baths of San Pietro in Bagno; there he grew worse, and died on the 14th September 1498, at the age of thirty-one, his wife, Catherine, only arriving a few hours before he died. Their only child was a boy, born five months before his father's death, afterwards the celebrated Giovanni delle Bande Nere.

[1] *See* Appendix VII.

## CATHERINE SFORZA

*Born* 1462. *Married* { I. GIROLAMO RIARIO, 1477 / II. GIACOMO FEO, 1489 / III. GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI, 1497 } *Died* 1509.

Catherine Sforza, who was the ancestress of all the Medici who follow, was regarded by those of her own time as a sort of wonder of her age, a woman of almost superhuman ability, courage, and resolution. Her history before she married into the Medici family is valuable, as, since her first marriage was into the family who were their greatest enemies, it throws a sidelight upon the story of the Medici during the time of Lorenzo the Magnificent, Pietro the Unfortunate, and the "Interregnum."

The Sforza were not, like their contemporaries the Este of Ferrara, of long and noble descent. Catherine's great-grandfather, Muzio Attendolo, who was given the name of "Sforza," had been a private soldier, the son of a peasant, but had raised himself to be a renowned commander, and married the widow of the King of Naples. His son, Francesco Sforza, had been a similarly renowned *condottiere* leader, who in 1441 had married Bianca Maria Visconti, and in 1450, by the help of Cosimo Pater Patriae, had become Duke of Milan.[1] His eldest son, Galeazzo Sforza, Catherine's father,[2] had succeeded him in 1466, and two years later had married the good Bona of Savoy, called "the Madonna of Italy," and a very different character from her sister, Louise of Savoy, mother of Francis I.

[1] Vol. i. p. 98.

[2] She was an illegitimate daughter.

Catherine Sforza was brought up by her grandmother, the Duchess Bianca Maria Visconti, who in all the early struggles of her husband, Francesco Sforza, was not only a most capable adviser and helper to him, and even on occasion a brave leader of his soldiers in battle, but also was adored by the people as a saint and the protector of the oppressed. She was the peacemaker and comforter wherever enmity, wrongs, or misery existed; and it was under her that Catherine was first shown what governing ought to be like. But she died in 1470, after which Catherine was brought up by her stepmother, the Duchess Bona.

Catherine, in accordance with the custom of the time, had a most elaborate education. We have already seen[1] how in the generation immediately preceding hers (in the time of Lucrezia Tornabuoni) ladies in Italy had begun to come forth from the seclusion previously customary, and to make themselves notable by their attainments. And in Catherine's time this became still more pronounced. The ladies of that age were accomplished to an extent which would now be thought scarcely possible. They were expected to be proficient in classical learning and Latin and Greek composition, to be conversant also with the current literature of their own and other countries, to have a knowledge of the various branches of art and science, to be as accomplished in music, dancing, and the playing of various instruments as their brothers were in the use of arms, and be able to ride well and take part in field sports. Cecilia Gonzaga, Ippolita Sforza,

[1] Vol. i. p. 187.

(Catherine's aunt),[1] and Catherine herself, with, a few years later, Isabella d'Este, her sister Beatrice d'Este, and their sister-in-law, Elisabetta Gonzaga, all furnish examples of the numerous attainments and wide range of culture of the ladies of this time. We read of Ippolita Sforza, at about twelve years old, delighting Pope Pius II., when he visited her father's court, by reciting a Latin oration composed by herself; of Cecilia Gonzaga reading and writing both Greek and Latin at eight years old; of Catherine herself, at the age of ten, reciting Latin verses of her own composition to welcome Cardinal Riario to her father's court; of Elisabetta Gonzaga singing Virgil's poems and accompanying herself on the lute; and of Isabella d'Este reading Virgil and Cicero when quite a young girl, and continuing her classical studies even when Marchioness of Mantua. While at the same time we read of these ladies dancing all night at balls, taking part in elaborate theatrical performances, and engaging in stag-hunts and boar-hunts in which they at times experienced serious accidents. The age was one in which "it was considered that classical learning was the chief ornament either to man or woman, and that it added a special charm to the latter"; and no difference was therefore made in the education of girls and boys in this particular. Castiglione, in summing up his ideas of the perfect lady, after saying "all inspiration comes from women," adds that it rests with her to inspire men with hope and courage on the battlefield, in the council

[1] At whose marriage to the Duke of Calabria in Milan in 1465 Lorenzo the Magnificent, then sixteen, was present.

chamber, in the pursuit of Art and Learning, and in the paths of virtue and religion. And these ladies grew up to be renowned for the powerful influence which they exercised on the life of their age, an influence due entirely to the high standard of education which they had received. Mrs Ady says:—

"By their intellectual attainments, their delicate culture, and their refined taste, these noble women of the Renaissance brought Art into close touch with life; and by their gracious and kindly sympathy and knowledge they cheered on the artist souls that were struggling towards the light, and helped to produce immortal works. Will posterity, we wonder, say as much for the ladies of our own age?"[1]

But in Catherine Sforza's life of activity and stress these matters could only be pursued occasionally, having perforce during long periods to be put aside, and she had more often to exercise her power of ruling men and her courage and skill in war, than her ability to compose Latin verses, to encourage Art, and to enjoy the conversation of learned men.

In 1471, when Catherine was nine years old, her father, Duke Galeazzo Sforza, paid that visit to Florence which has previously been mentioned,[2] and took with him his wife, Bona of Savoy, and his daughters, Anna and Catherine, when the latter for the first time met that Medici family into which she was long afterwards to marry. They stayed with Lorenzo and his brother Giuliano and their mother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni,

[1] *The Ladies of the Italian Renaissance*, by Mrs Ady.

[2] Vol. i. p. 217.

at the Medici Palace; and while they were amazed at the art collections they saw gathered there, it is evident that the nine-year-old girl looked with a sort of hero-worship upon the twenty-two-year-old Lorenzo the Magnificent; for during all the rest of her life, though she never saw him again, she always held him in the greatest admiration. Although six years later she became a member of a family who hated the Medici with a deadly hatred, nothing ever obliterated from her mind the memory of this visit, and she all her life felt a strong attraction for the Medici and Florence.

In 1476 her father, Duke Galeazzo, was murdered, and the Duchess Bona assumed the rule of Milan on behalf of her six-year-old son, Gian Galeazzo. Catherine had by this time been betrothed by her father to Girolamo Riario, nephew of Pope Sixtus IV., and it was feared that the death of the Duke might cause this engagement to be broken off. However, it did not do so, and in April 1477, when she was fifteen,[1] she was married by proxy at Milan, the small state of Imola, in Romagna, being given her as a dowry. She journeyed to Rome in much magnificence; and at Parma, Reggio, Modena, and Bologna, as well as at Imola and every halting place in the Papal states, was received with great ovations and festivities. She writes to her sister Chiara describing these receptions, and how "they never cease feasting me." In these letters she signs herself

[1] In those days fifteen was the fashionable age for a girl to be married. Speaking of the fourteenth century, Professor Del Lungo says:—"It came to be considered late if a girl married at twenty, or even at eighteen; fifteen was the 'age of beauty.'"—(*Women of Florence*, by Isidoro del Lungo.)

"Caterina Vicecomes," showing that the Sforza carried on the name of the Visconti. After travelling in this way for over a month she reached Rome. Seven miles from the city she was met by her future husband, Girolamo Riario, "that ex-custom-house clerk who never became a gentleman," with a very magnificent retinue; and as they proceeded towards the city they were joined by cardinals, prelates, and dignitaries of all sorts, and at last at the Ponte Molle by the Papal court and the ambassadors of Spain and Naples. Thus attended, Catherine made her first entry into Rome. We are told that when as a bride of fifteen she rode in through the Porta del Popolo in the midst of this brilliant assemblage her fine appearance created a great sensation. Her dress was "a cloak of black damask brocaded with gold, a skirt of crimson satin, and sleeves of black brocade"; and she is described as "of a fine figure, having a face to be admired rather than loved, the features of beautiful outline, the face hard and even stern, but full of vigour and intelligence." They rode through the narrow streets to the ancient basilica of St Peter's (which thirty years later was to be demolished by Julius II.), and there the marriage ceremony was again performed by Pope Sixtus IV. himself; after which the bride and bridegroom were escorted, amidst burning perfumes and festoons of flowers, to their palace (that now known as the Corsini palace) on the Lungara, in Trastevere. Then followed an immense banquet to about two hundred people with every kind of extravagant magnificence, which lasted for five hours.

The family into which Catherine had married was not an agreeable one. Sixtus IV. was the son of a fisherman on the coast near Ancona, and the whole family were exceedingly vulgar, and were hated by the Colonna, the Orsini, and the rest of the ancient Roman nobility. Girolamo Riario was the worst of the Pope's nephews, but had been made by Sixtus IV. Captain General of the Papal forces and the richest prince in Rome. He was vulgar, uncultured, violent, and arrogant, was loathed by the people for his crimes, and being an arrant coward, never trusted himself in the streets except when surrounded by a band of his villainous retainers, and Catherine, descended from a race of soldiers, can only have looked on him with contempt. However, her life was not without compensations; Pope Sixtus IV., brutal and vulgar tyrant as he was to others, behaved well towards her, and in a very short time she became so great a favourite with him that she wielded an immense influence. Few in that age, placed in such a position, would have borne the moral degradation of such a court as that of Sixtus IV. without being contaminated, but it is acknowledged that Catherine did so, and that personal and family pride kept her from being corrupted.

Amidst these surroundings Catherine lived for seven years, the first four of them the most prosperous and brilliant of her life. During these seven years she saw an immense change wrought in Rome, which when she arrived was mean and half ruined in appearance, but which was transformed by Sixtus IV. into a fine city. He

organised a department for public works, pulled down houses and widened the streets, and built the Sixtine chapel, various important churches, and many other of the buildings which still exist in Rome. In connection with these operations Catherine saw summoned to Rome every notable artist of the time, including Botticelli, Ghirlandajo, Perugino, Mantegna, Pinturicchio, Filippino Lippi, Melozzo da Forlì, Cosimo Roselli, and Luca Signorelli. At the same time Sixtus IV. founded the Vatican Library, of which a memorial exists in the picture[1] by Melozzo da Forlì of the Pope surrounded by his nephews giving to the librarian Platina the foundation statutes of the library. Catherine took part in these activities, while we are told that she did a great deal of reading, and delighted in the society of the numerous cultured and learned men then gathered in Rome.

The year after Catherine's marriage there took place (1478) the celebrated Pazzi conspiracy, headed by Sixtus IV. and her husband, Girolamo.[2] After the failure of that conspiracy Girolamo sent an emissary to Florence to poison Lorenzo the Magnificent; but this attempt also failed. Again Girolamo planned with certain Florentines to assassinate Lorenzo, and the day was appointed; but again the plot was discovered, and all the conspirators were executed.[3] Historians are unanimous

[1] A fresco transferred to canvas.

[2] Vol. i. pp. 229-242.

[3] The second of these attempts was the more disgraceful in that it was made in May 1481, notwithstanding that peace had been made by the Pope in the previous year (vol. i. p. 253). It was a plot to assassinate Lorenzo in the church of the Carmine, which Girolamo Riario got Battista Frescobaldi to engage to do. On the discovery of the plot Frescobaldi and all his fellow-conspirators were hanged from the windows of the Bargello.

that Catherine had no part in any of these plots, nor was told of them.

In 1478 the first of Catherine's children was born, a daughter, whom she named Bianca after her beloved grandmother. In the following year her eldest son was born, and was given the name of Ottaviano. During the next two years another son and a daughter were born.

In 1480 a quarrel between the two branches of the Ordelaffi family at Forlì, the adjacent state to Catherine's little domain of Imola, was seized upon by Sixtus IV. as a pretext for ejecting the Ordelaffi from their territory (over which they had ruled with honour for a hundred and fifty years), and giving it to Girolamo Riario. This junction of Forlì with Imola made a state of some political importance, especially as one of the two main roads from the north of Italy to Rome and Naples ran through it.

In June 1481 Girolamo and Catherine left Rome to pay a visit to their new state, accompanied by an enormous train of mules and carts laden with all the wealth which Girolamo had been able to plunder, and which he thought, as the Pope was growing old, it was advisable to remove from Rome. For many days this great baggage train crowded the long rough road from Rome by way of Orte, Terni, and Spoleto into Umbria, and thence over the passes of the Apennines and through Ancona, Pesaro, and Rimini to Forlì. The entry of Girolamo and Catherine into Forlì was a very grand affair, with triumphal arches, the streets hung with tapestries, companies of white-clad youths bearing palm

branches, a triumphal car full of children who sang Latin verses, bands of music, and the clanging of innumerable bells. Catherine rode on a white horse whose trappings of cloth of silver were embroidered with pearls; and over the heads of the pair a party of young nobles in white and gold carried a canopy for a mile before the town was reached. Then followed the usual feasting, and in the evening a ball, at which Catherine was much admired for her magnificent appearance in a dress covered with jewels, and a veil with the device, worked in silver and pearls, of a rising sun piercing the clouds.

In September they visited Venice, ostensibly for pleasure, but also with a political object. In the war of 1478-1480 between Florence and Sixtus IV., Duke Ercole d'Este of Ferrara had sided with Florence, and the Pope now wished to retaliate, and to obtain the help of Venice to enable him to treat the house of Este as he had the Ordelaffi, and take Ferrara for the ever-hungry Girolamo. They were greeted at Venice with a splendid reception; but the Venetians saw no reason why they should assist the Pope to take Ferrara for Girolamo; so, while they overwhelmed him and Catherine with honours and delighted them with gorgeous pageants, they sent them away without having effected anything; and Girolamo and Catherine (avoiding Ferrara) returned to Forlì, and from thence to Rome.

Catherine's portrait[1] by Palmezzano (with the castle of Forlì in the background), shows her as she was at this time, at the age of twenty, and

Plate XLV.

before she had yet demonstrated those extraordinary powers of courage and resolution which she possessed.

After their return to Rome Girolamo's enormities increased to such an extent that he became more detested than ever. At length, in the beginning of 1484, he instigated the Pope, with the help of the Orsini, to attack the Colonna, whose possessions he coveted. The Papal troops sacked the whole quarter in which stood the palaces of the Colonna; whereupon Girolamo perpetrated one of his most odious crimes. In order to save the life of the head of the family, the highly respected Lorenzo Colonna, who had fallen into the Pope's hands, Colonna's mother agreed conditionally to give up part of their estates. Nevertheless Girolamo, falsifying the Pope's most solemn word, basely took the life of Lorenzo Colonna, who was atrociously tortured to death in the castle of St Angelo on the 30th June 1484. Catherine shuddered at these crimes of her husband, and held herself as much as possible aloof from him, occupying herself with the care of her children, and removing herself and them for a time to Frascati. Her husband's baseness filled her with disgust; but when once or twice she reproached him for the vilencss of his crimes, he vented his wrath upon her with such violent brutality that after his death she told the Milanese envoy that she "had often envied those who died."

In the midst of these disturbances Pope Sixtus suddenly died, on the 12th August 1484. Anarchy at once ensued in Rome, and the Riario palace (which Catherine had furnished with great magni-

CATHERINE SFORZA, AT THE AGE OF TWENTY.
By Palmezzano.

*Alinari*] [*Forlì Gallery.*

ficence) was attacked by the mob, and sacked. Girolamo was absent with his troops at Paliano, and Catherine and her children were with him. He advanced with his force as far as the Ponte Molle, while Catherine boldly went on and entered the castle of St Angelo, which she declared she should hold for Count Girolamo. She was now twenty-two, and here gave the first sign of that military spirit and indomitable will which was afterwards to make her so famous. Rome was like a city given up to be sacked, the mob revelling in the abeyance of all authority. The cardinals sent messenger after messenger to Catherine demanding that she should give up the castle; but she only laughed at them, being determined to hold it until a new Pope had been elected and had confirmed her husband in his estates. They tried various expedients, but without avail. Catherine holding the Pope's castle was mistress of the situation, and the cardinals were afraid even to assemble for the conclave. At length they put such pressure upon her husband that, betrayed by him, she had to yield; whereupon she marched out with the honours of war, and she and Girolamo departed for Forlì, where two months later Catherine's third son was born.

Forlì during the next three years was by no means a bed of roses for Catherine. The people loved the Ordelaffi, and Girolamo Riario's character would have made him detested anywhere. So that there were frequent insurrections, both at Forlì and Imola, and either Girolamo or his Countess had constantly at short notice to hurry

from the one place to the other to quell these disturbances. In these labours of a difficult government Catherine took her full share, and it was only by her able assistance that Girolamo was able to preserve his position. On one occasion, in August 1487, when they were at Imola, her husband being ill, and only a few days before the birth of Catherine's fifth son,[1] urgent news came late in the evening that an insurrection had occurred at Forlì, and that one of the rebels, Codronchi, had murdered the *castellane* and seized the castle. Catherine forthwith ordered her horse and rode the sixteen miles to Forlì, arriving there at midnight, and proceeding to the gate of the castle, which dominated the town, summoned Codronchi to surrender it to her. He replied insolently, promising to think about it if she would return in the morning to breakfast. Catherine, sitting on her horse at midnight before the closed gates of her castle, was obliged to give in for the time, and retired to her palace in the town, but laid her plans for the next day. In the morning she presented herself again at the castle gate. She was told that only she herself, with one attendant "to carry her breakfast," would be admitted. Catherine, against the strong advice of her counsellors, accepted the terms offered, and taking with her Tommaso Feo, whom she knew she could trust, passed in. What transpired inside none know, but she brought such power to bear upon the rebellious Codronchi that after a few hours he delivered up the castle to her; whereupon she placed Tommaso Feo in command,

[1] A fourth son had been born in December 1485.

sallied forth accompanied by Codronchi, and rode away back to Imola taking him with her, and Forlì was saved. On the day after her return to Imola her fifth son, whom she named Francesco Sforza, was born (17th August 1487).

A few months after this, in April 1488, Girolamo Riario met the natural end of his many crimes, being assassinated in the palace at Forlì in an insurrection headed by the Orsi family. Catherine, with her six children and her sister Stella, were seized by the conspirators in another room, but not before she had contrived to send off a messenger to her half-brother, the Duke of Milan, with an urgent appeal to him to send troops to her assistance. She and her children were ignominiously marched through the crowded streets and locked up in the Orsi palace; thence they were removed in the evening to the fortress of San Pietro, where Catherine, her six children (the two youngest in the arms of their nurses), her sister, and two other attendants were all confined in one small room, and underwent much distress and terror, Catherine being the only one of the party who kept her head. The conspirators ordered Feo to give up the castle, but he refused; and next day by a ruse Catherine, leaving her children in the enemy's hands, escaped to the castle. They threatened to kill her children if she did not surrender, but she dared them to do it, and threatened them with the vengeance of the Duke of Milan, while the castle bombarded the town day and night. At length, after the castle had been besieged for a fortnight, troops came to her assistance from Milan; whereupon

the leaders of the rebellion fled, the town made a humble submission, and Catherine had conquered. We see her in this hour of her victory as she is described by Cerretani:—

"Wise, brave, great, speaking little, with a full, beautiful face; wearing a tan satin gown with two ells of train, a large black velvet hat in the French mode, and a man's belt whence hung a bag of gold ducats and a curved sword. And among the soldiers, both horse and foot, she was much feared; for that armed lady was both fierce and cruel."

Those of the ringleaders of the rebellion who were caught were executed; the palace of the Orsi was demolished, and all the men of that family who had not fled were put to death in vengeance for Girolamo's murder; and though Catherine did not show general vindictiveness, she showed herself hard and cruel, not only punishing the guilty with death, but consigning to dark and horrible dungeons their innocent families. On the other hand, she refused to allow the troops from Milan to sack the city, as they had been fully confident of doing, or even to enter it; and though this almost caused a mutiny among them, Catherine was resolute, and showed no less courage on this point than she had in confronting the rebellion. She returned to her palace in the town escorted only by a small picked body of these troops, who, though she had deprived them of the plunder of the city, could not help honouring her for the brave way in which she had fought her battle. "And on the way," says Bernardi, "many of our women embraced her feet, for a woman whose first exercise of

power was for the protection of other women had not till then been seen." Girolamo's body was buried at Imola, Catherine declaring that she would never forgive the canons of the cathedral of Forlì for having refused it burial; and during the remaining twelve years of her reign she never forgave them or entered the cathedral. The property of the Orsi family was, however, not confiscated, Catherine refusing to take anything of theirs; and she liberated after a short time the women of that family from their imprisonment.

Catherine was now twenty-six, and sovereign ruler of her state, her eldest son, Octavian, being still a child.[1] In the following year (1489) she married Giacomo Feo, the younger brother of her faithful *castellane*, Tommaso Feo, appointing the latter governor of Imola. Giacomo Feo was, we are told, "a fine handsome young man, courteous and pleasant to all, and skilled in all military exercises." She kept the government of her state in her own hands, he remaining simply the commander of her army. There was much jealousy in Forlì against Giacomo Feo on account of his elevation, and, though he did his best to allay it, this feeling smouldered. They had one son, called after his father, Giacomo.

In 1492 Catherine heard of the death at Florence of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Though he had been opposed through life to Girolamo Riario in consequence of the Pazzi conspiracy and the murder of his brother Giuliano, and so had placed Florence always in political opposition to Forlì,

[1] On her coins at this time she calls herself "Catharina Sfortia Vicecomes," ignoring the Riario connection altogether.

yet Catherine had never lost her regard for him and the Medici family; she had always contrived to maintain a sort of private and personal friendship with Florence outside the arena of politics, and much regretted Lorenzo's death. In the same year Sixtus IV.'s successor, Pope Innocent VIII., also died, and Cardinal Roderigo Borgia became Pope Alexander VI., in whom she was to find her bitterest enemy.

During the next two years Catherine was involved in a web of difficult policy. Charles VIII. was about to invade Italy, and Catherine's whole abilities were called forth to prevent her small state from being ravaged by the two foes, on the one side the French with Milan (her natural ally), and on the other Florence, with Rome and Naples. She trimmed perpetually between the two, but at length declared herself on the side of the latter party. When, however, her castle of Mordano was attacked and taken by the French while the troops of the allies made no attempt to give her garrison any assistance, she renounced the side of Florence, Rome, and Naples, and took that of the French and Milan. Many letters still extant passed at this time between her and Pietro the Unfortunate on the subject of these intricate politics. In 1494 Charles VIII. in his march through Italy sent a portion of his troops through her state, but they did her no harm, and were eventually recalled by Charles to meet him in Tuscany. Shortly afterwards Catherine's half-brother, Gian Galeazzo Sforza, died, and her uncle, Ludovico Sforza, proclaimed himself Duke of Milan.

In August 1495[1] those jealous of Giacomo Feo's advancement laid plans to murder him. Catherine, her husband, and her band of young sons were returning joyously from a hunting party, when at the Bogheri bridge Giacomo Feo, who was riding a little behind, was suddenly set upon by a party of conspirators, and stabbed to death. Catherine escaped to the castle and took a terrible vengeance. When her first husband—a man to whom she had been married as a matter of policy, and whom she loathed—was murdered she merely punished with a stern, hard justice. But her second husband was the man of her own choice, the first love of this vehement, strong-willed woman, whose great-grandfather had been given the name of "Sforza" on account of his violence and impetuosity, characteristics prominent in all the Sforza. Hence we now have a woman raging with tiger-like fury for the murder of her love, her terrible Sforza nature blazing up in all its awful madness of blind and passionate ferocity. The guilty, the families of the guilty (including women, girls, and even children), all on whom the slightest suspicion fell, were involved in a general destruction; and there followed indiscriminate slaughtering, hanging, torturing, banishment, and ruin. For Giacomo Feo's murder more than one hundred persons, men, women, and children, suffered various degrees of misery, over forty of them being put to death in most cruel ways.

"The beautiful Rosaria Ghetti, the unhappy

[1] The year after the elder branch of the Medici had been driven out of Florence, and that period had begun there which has been called the "interregnum" (*see* chap. xi.).

wife of the principal assassin of Feo, was dragged to the castle of Forlì, and there with her two little children thrown down a spiked well. . . . The dungeons of the castle were turned into abodes of lamentation and death; the hall where the *podestà* examined prisoners rang with the clank of instruments of torture and the desperate cries of the victims."[1]

Truly the Sforza nature was a terrible one when roused; the same qualities which produced such indomitable power to overcome difficulties and such an unquenchable spirit in adversity, produced in the hour of vengeance results at which mankind trembled. Even Catherine's own son, Octavian, then sixteen, was by her consigned to prison because she shrewdly suspected that he had had a share in the crime through his jealousy of Feo, even if he had not instigated it. All Italy shuddered at such a vengeance. Pope Alexander VI., though tolerably accustomed to terrible deeds, ventured on a remonstrance; but Catherine turned a deaf ear; until her wrath had destroyed every one and everything connected with the murder of Giacomo Feo she would listen to nothing.

At length the fury of her wrath was satisfied, and she turned her attention to other matters. Both famine and pestilence were at this time causing great suffering to her people, and Catherine threw herself into a contest with these evils with a fierce energy which seemed desirous of obliterating the memory of her bereavement by the most arduous labours, buying corn and

[1] *Life of Catherine Sforza*, by Count Pasolini.

organising famine relief, establishing dispensaries and hiring doctors from other states, and founding confraternities for the care of the sick and other charitable purposes. Politics also demanded all her abilities. The peaceful times of Italy had passed away, and a time of turmoil had succeeded in which her petty state threatened to be crushed between more powerful neighbours. She was divided between her desire to keep in friendship with her uncle's state of Milan and her ever-increasing sympathy with Florence. This latter feeling was in 1496 strengthened by there coming to her as Florentine envoy Giovanni de' Medici, known in Florence as Giovanni "Popolano."

Catherine wanted a guardian for her inert and effeminate son, Octavian; she also wanted a helper and adviser in her precarious position as the female ruler of a state which every power round her coveted; and she saw that she would have once again to contract a marriage of policy. She had always felt an attraction for the Medici family, while Giovanni was not only handsome and accomplished, but also showed much political ability. So in 1497, about two years after Giacomo Feo's death, she married her Florentine envoy, keeping it secret as long as she could for fear of the wrath of her uncle, Ludovico, Duke of Milan, who was constantly urging upon her to have nothing to do with Florence. When at last he plainly taxed her with intending such a marriage (after it had already taken place), she denied it in the most barefaced way, saying she was pained that her uncle should think it possible she would ever take a husband without first consulting him, or

marry one of whom he would not approve. However, eventually she had to acknowledge it, and then managed with such ability to show the political advantages of such an alliance that the Duke of Milan gave his consent.[1]

Soon afterwards the Pope sent her a proposal that her son Octavian should be married to his daughter, Lucrezia Borgia. The advantages that would be hers if she consented were plainly placed before her; the result if she refused would, she knew, sooner or later be war brought upon her by the Pope. Nevertheless, her whole soul recoiled from the idea of intermarriage with the Borgia family, with whose crimes all Italy rang. She therefore refused the proposal, and to keep her son out of the way sent him off to see something of war. She dreaded lest he should grow up with the sluggish temperament of his father Girolamo (as he did); so she despatched him with a body of troops to help Florence in its war against Venice and Pisa, and persuaded Giovanni de' Medici to go with him to instruct him in military affairs. These troops had been trained by herself, and during their absence at Pisa she continued to watch over their management, writing long letters containing minute instructions on all details of their administration.

In April 1498 her son Ludovico was born; she named him after her uncle, the Duke of Milan, to conciliate the latter; but when his father died five months later she changed his name to Giovanni, and by that name he is always

[1] From this time she calls herself on her coins "Catharina Sfortia Medices."

known. In August[1] her husband, Giovanni, became ill at Pisa and returned to Forlì, and went thence to the baths of San Pietro in Bagno, in the Apennines. After he had been there a few days she received an urgent summons from him saying he was worse, and begging her to come at once. She rode thither from Forlì in haste, but arrived to find him dying, and a few hours afterwards he breathed his last in her arms. His brother Lorenzo came, and conveyed his body to Florence for burial there; and Catherine returned in deepest grief, a third time a widow, to her desolate palace at Forlì.

Dangers now surrounded Catherine Sforza on every side. Through her alliance with Florence she was brought into collision with Venice on the north and the Pope on the south; while the latter was bent on punishing her for her refusal of his matrimonial project, and also wanted her state for his son, Cæsar Borgia. Venice demanded a passage through her territories for the troops it was sending against Florence, and thought she was too much plunged in grief to refuse. But war made Catherine herself again directly, and she refused the demand of Venice; and upon the latter sending a force against her she defeated it. At the same time Lorenzo the Younger (Lorenzo "Popolano"), her late husband's brother, demanded the custody of her child, on the plea that she must not expose him to the dangers which threatened herself. Catherine replied that there was nothing which she could refuse to the house of Medici,

[1] Savonarola had been put to death in Florence three months before.

except her child; and kept possession of him. Meanwhile, foreseeing that she would ere long be attacked, she devoted her whole attention to military affairs. Fortifying passes, repairing her town walls, enlisting fresh troops, providing new arms and immense supplies of ammunition, drilling her troops, sitting up late at night going through the accounts that she might provide funds for the payment of her soldiers, regulating even the discipline and expenses of the body of troops she still kept at Pisa with Octavian, arranging for "all the mules to be sent here"—in these and similar activities she displayed her unbounded energy and resource.

In July 1499 Florence sent to her an envoy, the celebrated Niccolò Machiavelli, to endeavour to obtain her agreement to various arrangements by which Forlì was to give much and obtain little. But not even Machiavelli could outwit Catherine, and we are told:—"The young envoy found more than his match in the woman he had tried, and failed, to circumvent." Apparently Catherine had by this time given up inhabiting her palace in the town, and for greater security had transferred her abode to a new residence which she had constructed in the castle. Tomasini, in his life of Machiavelli, describing "those long-vanished halls that witnessed these interviews of Catherine Sforza and Niccolò Machiavelli," says:—

"Catherine had demolished that part of the citadel which had seen her temporary humiliation by the insurgents, and on the highest part of the walls, which were held to be impregnable, had built herself a new and magnificent abode. She

had named this 'Paradiso,' from its beauty and the fine architecture of its lofty rooms, decorated with splendid paintings, and brilliant with gilded goffered ceilings on which were displayed the arms of the Visconti. . . . In these rooms, and amidst those defences where not long afterwards this brave woman calmly awaited the assault of the Borgia and her own ruin, she received the envoy Niccolò Machiavelli, who carried away with him a deep impression of her beauty, her greatness of soul, and the strength of her castle."[1]

All through the year 1499 Catherine was busy in preparing for the attack which was coming upon her from the Pope and his ally, the new King of France, Louis XII. The latter had deprived her uncle Ludovico of his throne and put him to flight, so no assistance could come to her from Milan. The Republic of Florence could not help her, for it was itself at this time trembling before Cæsar Borgia, and (notwithstanding the specious protestations of Florentine friendship which had been conveyed to her by Machiavelli) dared take no action which would bring trouble upon Florence from that quarter. No other states would ally themselves with her against two such powerful adversaries as the Pope and the King of France. Alexander VI. issued a bull by which he deposed this "daughter of iniquity," and invested Cæsar Borgia with her territories. And Louis XII. addressed a circular letter to the states of Italy stating that he was despatching an army under Cæsar Borgia, Duke of Valentino, to besiege and take the fortresses of Imola and Forlì on behalf of

[1] *Life of Niccolò Machiavelli,* by Tomasini.

the Pope. Thus the force which Cæsar Borgia was able to bring against her was far beyond anything which she could put in the field; for he had not only the whole of the Papal forces, but also 15,000 French under Ives d'Allègre and 4,000 Swiss.

But nothing daunted Catherine Sforza's stout heart, and she prepared with the utmost energy to resist the united power of the Pope and the King of France, and worked away at her defences as though she had any number of powerful allies, instead of only the strength of her own small state. Though she knew that she was enormously overmatched, and that all her efforts would be powerless to prevail against such a force, she was determined to defend the rights of her children to the last. She cut down all the trees round the town; she burnt down the suburbs; she destroyed even the pleasure-house in her park, and cut down its trees; she erected fortifications in every direction; she sent away her children to Florence; she diverted the streams in the hills and flooded the whole country round the town; and she devoted every spare hour to personally drilling her troops and increasing their efficiency.

In November 1499 Cæsar Borgia's army advanced against Imola; it was furiously attacked, taken by assault, and sacked. This frightened the citizens of Forlì, and the Signoria, after long debate, and "much hustling by Catherine," declined to stand by her against the Pope, and agreed to surrender the town. Catherine, on receiving their message to this effect, sent Landriani to tell the members of the Signoria that they were "rabbits." She withdrew her forces into the castle and there

stood at bay; and on the following day Cæsar Borgia with his army entered the town. He did his utmost to induce her to surrender, but without avail; the more desperate her case grew, the more resolute Catherine became. The castle was fiercely attacked, but successfully resisted all the enemy's efforts; it steadily bombarded the town, and especially the palace in which Cæsar Borgia had taken up his quarters, which made him furious. After some time he tried a parley, and advanced to the edge of the moat, and presently Catherine looked down on him from the battlements. He pointed out to her the overwhelming strength of his forces and the uselessness of further struggle, and urged her to yield; but she replied that she "was the daughter of one who knew no fear, and was determined to walk in his steps till death." So the bombardment continued. Again a second time he tried a parley, urging upon her still more forcible arguments, but with the same result. Catherine hoped that her half-sister, the Empress of Germany, would induce the Emperor Maximilian to send her assistance; but the latter dreaded Cæsar Borgia too much to do so, and no help came to the beleaguered castle of Forlì.

All through December 1499 the furious contest went on, the castle being continuously attacked, but successfully beating off all assaults. Damage done to the defences by day was regularly repaired each night, and Catherine's resource seemed inexhaustible; while the high spirit with which she conducted her defence, and encouraged the sinking hearts of her troops as their numbers gradually dwindled, won the admiration even of her foes,

and especially of the French, who swore they would like to serve under her command. Catherine at this time wore armour permanently, and there is still to be seen a suit of woman's plate armour said to have been hers, which may have been that worn by her during this siege.[1]

"On the last night of the year she took counsel till late at night with her captains and engineers, and at early morn made a thorough inspection of the entire castle. From the height of the chief tower, which she had climbed to look down on the city, the enemy's camp, and the ravaged and snow-clad plain, she saw the dawn of a new century, and the sun rise on the 1st of January 1500."[2]

Four days later a breach was made in the castle walls which could not be repaired, and the enemy forced their way in. But Catherine retreated to the citadel, and still stood at bay, and her beloved "Paradiso" was defended to the end. "Never," wrote Grunello, "had been seen a woman of such spirit." At length, when the castle was crowded with the enemy, the citadel still remaining hers, Catherine ordered the magazine to be blown up, determined to perish unconquered in the ruins; but it was done ineffectively, and only gave further assistance to the attack. At last Cæsar Borgia demanded to parley with her, and while she spoke with him she was treacherously seized from behind, and the defence of Forlì by its lion-hearted Countess was at an end (8th January 1500).

D'Allègre, the French commander, declared that Catherine was the prisoner of the King of

[1] Though other accounts say that she wore chain armour at this time.
[2] *Life of Catherine Sforza,* by Count Pasolini.

France; but Cæsar Borgia refused to give her up, and on the 23rd of January he marched out of Forlì conveying her as a prisoner to Rome, and treating her with many indignities. Cæsar Borgia reached Rome on the 26th February, and as Catherine once more entered through the Porta del Popolo she must have contrasted this entry with that first brilliant one of hers as a girl of fifteen twenty-three years before. At first she was treated well, but was soon consigned to the dungeons of the castle of St Angelo on a charge of plotting to poison the Pope, and was there shamefully treated. The Borgia did not dare openly to put to death one whose sister was married to the Emperor and whom the King of France claimed as his prisoner, but they intended that she should die nevertheless; and for a whole year she disappeared from sight. However, in June 1501 the French army returned to Italy and heard of her disappearance into the dungeons of St Angelo; her gallant defence of Forlì had shed glory on the French arms by their capture of so formidable a castle, and Louis XII. refused to allow her to be thus treated, and insisted on her being set at liberty. Cæsar Borgia opposed her liberation with all his might, declaring that she would turn Lombardy and Romagna upside down; but the commander of the French army, D'Allègre, who had tried to protect Catherine from him when she surrendered at Forlì, swore that if she were not set free at once the French army, then approaching Rome, should plunder and sack the city; and the Pope had to submit.

D'Allègre rode himself to the castle of St Angelo

to announce to Catherine her freedom. Then was revealed what she had endured since she had been imprisoned in the Borgia's dungeons.

"The woman who rose to greet Monseigneur D'Allègre bore no resemblance to her whom he had known a year and a half ago. She had spent over a year in the dark, narrow cell into which the Borgia had thrust her. They had expended as little as possible on her, in continual expectation of her death. She was haggard from suffering and scant food, worn by fever, and livid from living in the dark. . . . Every time that her scanty food was brought her she had dreaded poison; every night she had dreaded the Tiber. D'Allègre was horrified; could this be the fiery lady of Forlì, grand even in defeat, whom he had last seen at the close of her gallant struggle to defend her castle? She was so changed that he did not know her."[1]

And now there comes out a new trait in this woman's character; and it is witnessed to by her own letters. These show that her sufferings were no surprise to her; *she felt that she deserved them.* The influences of her earliest years, under her grandmother, Bianca Visconti, and the Duchess Bona, had never deserted Catherine Sforza. And her letters show that while she believed that God would punish the Borgia for their cruel treatment of herself, she believed no less that in her own sufferings, her victims—those innocent ones who had been thrown down spiked wells, or had been tortured to death in her dungeons—were being avenged, and that God had surely punished her who had been guilty of these crimes.

[1] *Life of Catherine Sforza,* by Count Pasolini.

She was liberated on the 13th July 1501, and at once fled from Rome by the Tiber in a boat to Ostia, thence by sea to a point on the coast near Pisa, and thence by road to Florence. She chose this route because she knew that Cæsar Borgia, disgusted at her being set free, had posted assassins on the land route to murder her. At Florence she met all her children, and was received with cordiality by her late husband's brother, Lorenzo the Younger, the Florentines welcoming her with a public ovation; the warmth of which reception much offended the Pope. Yet this woman, who had formerly so fiercely denounced her enemies, whose violence of language when roused had been the terror of Forlì, and who had been betrayed, calumniated, and tortured by the Borgia, never afterwards mentioned them in anger. Of her sufferings she would never speak. Once only to her Dominican confessor she said: "Could I write all, the world would turn to stone."

During the remaining eight years of her life Catherine lived at Florence in much retirement, chiefly at her late husband's villa of Castello; though even here she did not enjoy peace, being much harassed both by the money difficulties and incapacity of her elder sons, and by a long struggle, ending with lawsuit, to protect the property of her youngest son. On the death in 1503 of Pope Alexander VI. most of the princes of Romagna whose states he and Cæsar Borgia had seized resumed them again, and Catherine urged her son Octavian to do the same and take possession of Forlì; but he being indolent and incapable, declined to make any such effort. It

is remarkable to notice how, notwithstanding all their mother's ability and energy, not one of all her five sons by her first husband Riario, nor her son by her second husband Feo, inherited a particle of her qualities, but were all of them without capacity, energy, or strength of character; whereas in her son by her third husband Giovanni de' Medici, all Catherine's qualities were reproduced in full vigour, and in him Medici and Sforza were most powerfully blended.

This boy Giovanni was now five years old and Catherine soon found herself involved in an arduous conflict to protect him from the designs of his uncle, Lorenzo the Younger, and the latter's son, Pier Francesco the Younger. The former, while Catherine was in prison at Rome and unlikely ever again to appear, had spent a large part of his late brother's inheritance, and this would be discovered unless they could get the boy into their hands. Accordingly, after various unsuccessful endeavours to get Catherine to give him up, they went to law with her over her guardianship of him, and also over the possession of her late husband's villa of Castello. All Catherine's fighting instincts were roused by this conduct; Castello became to her another Forlì; she declared that "they should only get her out of it in pieces." At length, however, she was obliged to leave it for a time until the result of the lawsuit, which dragged on interminably, should become known; and while thus forced to leave her abode, took refuge at that convent of the Murate where another Catherine was, twenty-three years later, to live during the dawn

CATHERINE SFORZA, WIFE OF GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI, AT FORTY-FIVE.
By Vasari.

*Alinari*] [*Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.*

of life instead of its close. Eventually the lawsuit was given in Catherine's favour, but then Lorenzo contrived to steal the boy, and she had again to go to law to get him back. Thereupon, considering that his life was in danger, she sent him to the convent of the Annalena, where she caused him to be dressed in girl's clothes and kept there in hiding for about a year. Catherine's portrait by Vasari[1] shows her as she was at this time in her life.

The loss of the above lawsuit, which had become a *cause célèbre* in Florence, together with the disgrace which he incurred among his fellow-countrymen on account of the embezzlement of his nephew's property, so preyed on Lorenzo's mind that he fell ill and died (1507). Whereupon Catherine returned with her boy Giovanni (now nine years old) to the villa of Castello, where she spent the remaining two years of her life in training him in all manly exercises. Catherine delighted in him; he was a true Sforza, "all fire, arms, and horses," as she writes, and she was for these last two years of her life perfectly happy. But her naturally vigorous health had been permanently ruined by her terrible imprisonment. After two happy years with her fiery little son at Castello, her health, in the early part of the year 1509, began altogether to give way, one of her feet especially causing her much suffering. To be

[1] Plate XLVI. Owing to a mistake of the photographers, which has now been corrected, many photographs of this portrait and of that shown in Plate XLVIII. exist in which the names Catherine Sforza and Maria Salviati have been interchanged; with the result that books which have been published containing reproductions of these photographs have perpetuated the mistake as to these two portraits.

nearer to doctors she moved into the city; and on the 28th of May 1509 Catherine Sforza, the brave Countess of Forlì, passed away at the age of forty-seven. She died at the house in the Via Larga which was then the next but one to the Medici Palace.[1] She was buried in the chapel of the Murate convent, where she had spent a great part of her latter years; but her tomb is not now to be seen, having been broken up when a few years ago that convent was converted into the State prison. At her death she confided the charge of her son to Jacopo Salviati, who had been his tutor, and was also a connection by marriage, his wife Lucrezia being a daughter of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and belonging to that elder branch of the Medici family who had been exiled, and who at this time seemed unlikely ever to be allowed to return to Florence.

[1] Her house (which had been the property of her husband, Giovanni) is now No. 5 Via Cavour. It is visible in Plate V., a small house standing next to the northern end of the Medici Palace. In her time between her house and the Medici Palace intervened the house of her enemy, Pier Francesco the Younger, which at his death passed to his son Lorenzino, and was afterwards destroyed, the addition to the Medici Palace being built on its site (vol. i. pp. 510-511).

# CHAPTER XXIII

## GIOVANNI DELLE BANDE NERE AND MARIA SALVIATI

### GIOVANNI DELLE BANDE NERE

*Born* 1498. *Died* 1526.

The life of Giovanni delle Bande Nere,[1] the only soldier of the Medici family, comes like a refreshing wind from another sphere in the midst of all the diplomacy, craft, and ignoble scheming of the times of Leo X., Clement VII., Francis I., and Charles V., which is the period in which his short life was passed.

The only child of Giovanni de' Medici and his wife, Catherine Sforza, he was born in Forlì on the 6th April 1498, and when about a year and a half old was sent away by his mother from Forlì (then about to be attacked) to Florence, to the charge of his uncle, Lorenzo. When he was three years old his mother arrived at Florence from her imprisonment at Rome, and Giovanni returned to her care; and his earliest recollections must have been those of the villa of Castello, with its stiff and formal garden and adjacent woods. When about eight years old he was sent by his mother to the convent of the Annalena, where

[1] Plate XLVII.

he was kept in hiding, disguised as a girl, like another Achilles. After about a year he returned to his mother's care, living with her at the villa of Castello, and being entirely trained by her. As a boy he cared for nothing but riding, swimming, and manly exercises, and was difficult to manage, being fiery and headstrong, though he showed an affectionate and generous nature. He was the joy of his mother's heart, as she saw in him one such as her own ancestors had been; and she was never tired of expatiating on his manly spirit and his love of arms, horses, and military exercises. At the same time she knew that strength and valour alone would not enable him to achieve success in that military career for which almost from his very cradle he showed such a strong inclination, and from the time he was nine years old she sought everywhere for the best tutors for him, being determined to make him a man fitted to command armies and rule a state.

His mother, however, died when he was still only eleven years old, and, in accordance with her will, Jacopo Salviati became his guardian; and under the care of Salviati and his wife Lucrezia Giovanni remained until he was seventeen. The charge was not an easy one, for even as quite a little boy he would never obey any one but his mother, so that when she died there was no one who could control him; but in time Lucrezia gained great influence over him, and he always held her in much respect. The Salviati lived in a palace in the Corso in Florence notable as being that in which had lived in the thirteenth century Folco Portinari, the father of Dante's

Beatrice, and which the Salviati when it became theirs had restored.[1] Here Giovanni grew up, taking warmly to all things which would fit him for a military career, but averse to books except such as might assist that object.

Pope Alexander VI. had been succeeded by Pope Julius II., and under his auspices, when Giovanni was fourteen, the elder branch of the Medici returned to Florence. Giovanni watched their entry into the city, and writes that it was "a fine sight." The government of Florence thereupon passed into the hands of Giuliano (Duc de Nemours), Lucrezia Salviati's brother; and a few months later, on the death of Julius II., her other brother, Giovanni, became Pope Leo X. This changed considerably the position of the Salviati, and henceforth the young son of Catherine Sforza looked forward to obtaining his much-desired military career through Lucrezia Salviati's influence with her brother, the Pope.

In 1515, when Giovanni was seventeen, Leo X. sent for him to Rome, where Giovanni speedily distinguished himself by numerous quarrels and equally numerous deeds of bravery; one of these latter is depicted on the wall of the Sala di Giovanni delle Bande Nere, in the Palazzo Vecchio, showing him, when a band of the Orsini tried to take him prisoner, forcing his way through them with only ten soldiers. During this time we find Lucrezia Salviati writing to him as a mother to her son, and giving him much good

[1] It stands near the corner where the Corso joins the Via del Proconsolo, and now forms part of the schools of the Padri Scolopi.

advice. In the following year, when he was eighteen, Giovanni at last obtained that which had been the desire of his heart from his earliest years, and was given by the Pope command of a troop of a hundred cavalry, and saw his first campaign, he and his troops being sent as part of the force despatched by Pope Leo to attack Urbino, under the command of the Pope's nephew Lorenzo, who had become ruler of Florence.

In this campaign Giovanni showed so many valuable qualities as a leader that he was soon advanced to a larger command. He manifested from the very first all those qualities which most endear a commander to those whom he leads in war, and in a very short time his soldiers idolized him. And there was some one else who idolized him too, namely, his guardian's sensible and good-hearted daughter, Maria Salviati, who had grown up with him, and knew all his aspirations, and worshipped this fine young soldier who loved her and was so rapidly winning distinction. So in November 1516, when Giovanni came back from his first campaign, they were married, he being then a little over eighteen and she seventeen. By this marriage the two branches of the Medici family were united, Maria's mother being a great-granddaughter of Cosimo Pater Patriae, and Giovanni a great-grandson of Cosimo's brother Lorenzo.[1]

But not for long did Giovanni remain encircled by the silken cords of love. He was soon back again with his troops, and seeking fighting wherever it was to be found. Nor did he even confine himself to land operations; once, when there was

[1] *See* Appendix I.

no fighting to be done on land, he managed to get three small ships fitted out, and proceeded on a cruise in pursuit of the pirates who infested the coasts of the Adriatic. His rise was tremendously rapid, and we soon find him given by Leo X. the command of a force of four thousand infantry and a hundred cavalry, and sent to attack Fermo. A hard-fought battle ensued, in which Giovanni was victorious; his letter announcing his success is to be seen in the State archives in Florence, written in the bold, round style which characterises his handwriting. Meanwhile Maria remained in Florence, living in the Salviati palace, where on the 12th June 1519 a son was born to them whom they named Cosimo, at the request of Pope Leo X., after the latter's ancestor, Cosimo Pater Patriae. It is told of Giovanni that in order to make the child courageous he had him thrown from the first floor of the Salviati palace into the courtyard, where he stood and caught him in his arms; though what Maria thought of such escapades with her child is not related.

In this year 1519, when Giovanni was twenty-one, Lorenzo (Duke of Urbino), the nephew of Leo X., died; and as he left only a daughter, while Giuliano (Duc de Nemours) had left no legitimate heir, it was evident that on the death of Pope Leo X. the rights of the Medici to the rule of Florence would pass to the younger branch, of which Giovanni was the most important representative. The latter, however, was rapidly making for himself so great a reputation as a commander in war that he despised all such questions, and gave no attention to the matter. The time was one

in which war was becoming the normal condition in Italy, and by the time that Giovanni was twenty-two he commanded a force of his own; and these troops were becoming renowned throughout Italy. From the black armour which they wore they were called the "Bande Nere" (or Black Bands), which gave Giovanni the name by which he is known in history. And so invariable was his success in command of this force that he had already gained the title of "The Invincible," and was one of the most noted leaders in Italy.

In 1521, when he was twenty-three, the long war between Francis I. and Charles V. began, and Giovanni delle Bande Nere was now to have a larger field for the display of his military talents. So far as Italy was concerned this first campaign between the two great antagonists resolved itself into a struggle for the possession of Milan, which since the battle of Marignano in 1515 had belonged to France. Pope Leo X. sided with Charles V., and to assist the imperial army in the campaign in Lombardy against the French commander, De Lautrec, sent a large body of troops of which the Bande Nere formed an important part. In these operations we find Giovanni holding with his force the line of the Adda to the east of Milan, and eventually performing a remarkable feat in swimming his entire force across that river in order to make a rapid advance upon Milan; the result of this was that the city was taken, to the great delight of the Pope, who, however, died a week or two afterwards.

During the short pontificate of Adrian VI. the war languished, but in 1523, soon after

Clement VII. had become Pope, the French again invaded Lombardy, and during this and the following year the fighting in northern Italy was incessant. By the death of Leo X. Giovanni delle Bande Nere (failing his cousin Lorenzino, then six years old) had become the only legitimate representative of the Medici claims to the rule of Florence. But Clement VII. was scheming in every way to keep that rule from passing to the younger branch of the family; and seeing in this successful soldier a dangerous obstacle to his views, managed to find constant employment for Giovanni and the Bande Nere, hoping that sooner or later he would get killed in battle. And Giovanni, caring nothing for political affairs, and entirely absorbed in his profession, was only too ready to be kept thus employed.

Meanwhile Giovanni's reputation as a great soldier grew continually, his renown spreading even as far as England. He had begun by being looked upon as a uniformly successful leader of a first-rate body of troops; he was now getting to be considered indispensable wherever large operations were to be undertaken. His poor young wife Maria saw little of him, and was for ever imploring him to come home and attend to his family affairs. For she had thoroughly fathomed Pope Clement's design; and, in a letter to her husband in 1523, shows how bitterly she felt this crafty plan of the Pope's, and the certainty that sooner or later Giovanni's life would be sacrificed. But Giovanni was not to be got away from the stirring life of the camp and the great game of war. For a little time, however, during a pause in

the military operations, he was persuaded to retire to Reggio, where Maria was delighted to get him to herself for a few months, and induce him to lead a quiet life, occupying himself with field sports. It was probably at this time that Titian's portrait of him (Plate XLVII.) was painted. At Reggio, attracted by his fame, there gathered round him quite a small court of notable men; among these was Pietro Aretino,[1] a man more in his element in the baneful atmosphere of the court of Charles V. than in the wholesomer air of camps, but between whom and Giovanni delle Bande Nere a strong friendship soon grew up. But this time of rest at Reggio did not last long, and Giovanni was soon again in the field. Shortly afterwards Maria writes to him still more strongly than before, pointing out Pope Clement's artifices, and how he was arranging to attack Ancona, and sending Giovanni in command of the expedition, solely with the object of keeping him continually employed, and in the hope that he would eventually be killed in battle. But poor Maria's tender exhortations fell on deaf ears.

Early in 1525 Francis I. made his great invasion of Lombardy, and Giovanni delle Bande Nere, in command of the contingent furnished by the Pope, joined the French King before Pavia, to take part in the siege. Ten days before the battle of 24th February, Giovanni, while reconnoitring the enemy, was severely wounded by a round shot and his leg broken, and was carried to Piacenza. Then ensued the great battle, and the

[1] His portrait, by Titian, is to be seen in the Pitti Gallery.

PLATE XLVII.

GIOVANNI DELLE BANDE NERE.
By Titian.

*Alinari*] [*Uffizi Gallery*

destruction of the whole French army. Francis I. always declared that if Giovanni delle Bande Nere had been there he would not have lost the day; and the accounts of the battle tend to show that he was probably right. This disaster to the French arms put an end to the war for the time. Meanwhile Giovanni was lying wounded at Piacenza, and his troops were in great destitution, owing to its being impossible to extract their pay from the Pope, who took advantage of their commander being *hors de combat* to withhold it. In this emergency Maria, as usual, proved herself a faithful and capable assistant to her husband. She writes beseeching him not again to attach himself to the Pope's cause, pointing out the duplicity with which Clement was treating him, and saying:—

"There will be no Popes like those that are gone. . . . Will you not cease to be at the beck and call of others, and come home and attend to your own concerns, now that there is time? God alone knows the future; remember Papa Leo, and how suddenly he died."

Ending her letter with the prayer that God will keep Giovanni in safety. And then having written thus, she went in person to Rome, and bravely assailed Pope Clement, demanding the pay of Giovanni's soldiers, and forced him to give her six thousand ducats for them.

But Maria did not get her Giovanni to come home and attend to his own concerns. Even before his wound was healed he was again busy in preparations for the fresh campaign which was

impending. He writes to Maria to buy fresh horses, arms, and equipment in Florence to replace those lost in the recent operations, and for the new levies which he was raising. And she, though it strained his resources greatly, complied. And a few months later Giovanni was again at the head of his troops, and the tide of war once more sweeping over Lombardy. Francis I. having regained his liberty, there was formed in 1526 the league between France, the Pope, Venice, and Florence against Charles V.; and at such a time Giovanni delle Bande Nere, Italy's foremost commander, could not be absent. His command now consisted of the whole of the infantry supplied by the Pope and Florence, together with a corps of about a thousand cavalry; while the entire army of the allies was commanded by the Duke of Urbino. Various operations took place, in which the Duke of Urbino was completely out-generaled by the imperial commander, the Duke of Bourbon, and the allied army forced to retire.

And then came the end; that end for which Clement had hoped, and which Maria had so long sorrowfully foreseen. On the bank of the Mincio, in the plain of Governolo, eight miles from Mantua, there were in November four days' severe fighting; and on the fourth day Giovanni was struck by a shot from the enemy's artillery in the leg previously wounded at Pavia. They carried him to Mantua, where, though an enemy, he was lodged by Federigo Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, in his own palace, and treated with every honour. Pietro Aretino was with him, and was directed to tell him that his leg must be amputated,

a terrible operation in those days. They said he must be held by ten men, but he declared that no one should hold him, "and, taking the candle, held it himself throughout the operation, which was performed with great ignorance and roughness,[1] causing indescribable agony." And after all it was useless, for mortification set in a few hours afterwards. He endured intense pain, in the midst of which, however, he sent an affectionate message to poor Maria, and wrote an admirable brief address of farewell to his soldiers; and then, saying he would not die in a sick-bed, had himself placed on his camp bed, and the pain thereupon departing, he fell asleep and so died (30th November 1526). He was buried in his armour, in the church of San Francesco in Mantua; but in 1685 his remains were brought back to Florence, and buried in the family mausoleum. And when the Medici coffins were opened in 1857, more than three hundred years after his death, his body was found still lying in its black armour, and with the amputated leg.[2] Many of his letters are in the State archives of Florence, while his most prominent deeds in war are immortalised in the frescoes on the walls of the Sala di Giovanni delle Bande Nere in the Palazzo Vecchio. He left only one son, Cosimo, who was seven years old when his father died.

[1] As was also evidenced by the ragged bone, from the rough saw, seen many years afterwards when his coffin was opened.

[2] "His remains were in a coffin covered with black velvet enclosed in another coffin of red wood. The bones were fallen apart, but were enclosed in his black armour, the helmet having the visor closed. The right leg had been amputated, the bone showing how badly it was sawn, and making it well able to be understood why this caused his death. A leaden plate at the head bore an inscription giving his name, and the date and manner of his death, and detailing his great deeds in war." (*Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum*, 1357.)

The grief of the soldiers of the Bande Nere at their great commander's death was overwhelming. They wore mourning for him for the rest of their lives, and, carrying a black banner, his celebrated corps won added honour even after he was gone to the name he had made so renowned. And long afterwards they gave a notable proof of their regard for him. Most of Giovanni's soldiers were recruited from his mother's former patrimony of Imola. And many years after his death, when his son Cosimo was ruler of Florence, and a movement against the latter was being got up in Romagna, we are told that around Imola it could make no way, the old soldiers of Giovanni delle Bande Nere repressing every whisper against their revered commander's son.

As regards the character of Giovanni delle Bande Nere as a soldier, we are told again and again of his extraordinary bravery, his fortitude amidst dangers and hardships, his modesty, just dealing, generosity, and unselfishness. The person who knew him best was Pietro Aretino, who thus describes him:—

"He gave away to his soldiers more than he ever kept for himself. Fatigue and hardship he endured with the greatest patience. In the battle-field he wore no distinguishing mark, so that by his conspicuous valour alone could he be singled out from his men. He was ever the first to mount, the last to dismount. He esteemed men according to their value, not according to their rank or wealth. He was always better than his word in action, but in council he never traded on his great reputation. He had a wonderful art of governing his soldiers, now by love and now by fear.

Of all things he held indolence in most horror. There is no doubt that his disposition was naturally virtuous; his faults were those only of youth, so that, had it pleased God to give him a longer life, every one would have been as convinced of his goodness as I am myself. It is certain that he had a most affectionate heart. In short, many may envy him, but none can imitate him."

So died, at the age of twenty-eight, the greatest commander produced by Italy in the sixteenth century;[1] one of whom it has been said that had he lived longer the history of Italy would have been altered and the Emperor Charles V. have been shorn of much of his glory;[2] one also who attained the eminence he did, not, like Gaston de Foix or Charles of Bourbon, through being related to a king, but entirely by his own talents. We may well enquire what were the particular methods, peculiar to himself, by excelling in which Giovanni delle Bande Nere, in only ten years from the time that he was given his first troop of one hundred men, made himself the greatest commander in Italy. There were plenty of conspicuously brave men among the leaders of troops at this time, but they did not achieve the success attained by him; so that we must look

[1] As the greatest soldier which Florence has produced, his statue has been placed in the gallery of honour in the Uffizi colonnade.

[2] It has often been said that had Giovanni delle Bande Nere lived only a year longer the capture and sack of Rome in 1527 would by him have been prevented. And this is almost certainly correct. For if upon Bourbon's undisciplined horde of ragged soldiery, as they streamed through Umbria on their way to Rome, had been brought an attack from the strictly disciplined Bande Nere led by their celebrated commander, not all Bourbon's great talent as a general could have saved his army from destruction. In which case the whole subsequent course of events, and the position of Clement VII. towards Charles V., would have been altered.

elsewhere than to his renowned bravery for the secret of that success. If his history is studied it will be found that two main lines of action produced the result, both of them demonstrating unusual insight into his profession.

As regards the first of these, it is stated that he was the first commander in war who exercised a personal care over his troops. This new departure on his part had greater results than many—at all events at that time—would have supposed likely. For we find that his care of his men, watchful protection of their interests, generosity, justice, and absence of regard for himself, when joined to his great courage and chivalrous character, made his soldiers, notwithstanding his very strict discipline, ready to make efforts for him which none other could have obtained from them.

But the second way in which Giovanni delle Bande Nere struck out a new line for himself is more remarkable, requiring as it did an unusual independence of spirit. In those days (as in many subsequent times) it was considered a finer thing to command men who rode than men who fought on foot. Giovanni delle Bande Nere held another view. It is stated that he was the first commander since Julius Cæsar to realise that since it is the infantry arm which in battle bears the brunt of the fighting,[1] that arm must in all ways be given the chief importance (both in peace and war) by a commander who desires success. Acting on this, which only his unusually ardent love for the

[1] Although the fighting of that age was child's play compared to the warfare of the present day, this axiom of war has only become more intensified.

soldier's profession enabled him to discern, Giovanni delle Bande Nere, though he had begun as a leader of cavalry, very early in his career changed to being an infantry commander, and remained such for the rest of his life. As a consequence he became, we are told, "the first commander under whom the infantry began to acquire fame since the time of the Roman legions."

The result of these two courses of action was that his infantry became such as no infantry had been for many centuries, and won for him the name of "The Invincible" at only twenty-two, while by the time he was twenty-eight he had become the greatest commander in Italy.

## MARIA SALVIATI

*Born* 1499. (*Married* 1516.) *Died* 1543.

Maria Salviati,[1] daughter of Jacopo Salviati and his wife, Lucrezia de' Medici, and granddaughter of Lorenzo the Magnificent, is one of the most attractive characters of the age, though she lived in the worst time in Florentine history. Married at seventeen to Giovanni de' Medici (soon to become known as Giovanni delle Bande Nere), who had been brought up with her from the time that she was ten and he eleven years old, she made him a most excellent wife. She was of an exceedingly affectionate disposition; she was a virtuous woman in an age when it was the exception; and she was no less noteworthy for her strong sense, wisdom, and capacity. She

[1] Plate XLVIII. *See* remarks in regard to this portrait and that shown in Plate XLVI. (p. 211, footnote).

helped Giovanni in all his difficulties, and whereas he was from his fiery and headstrong nature always ready to become involved in some trouble, she was ever on the watch from a distance, displaying a wonderful forethought, and sending him sound advice which saved him from many quarrels. Her letters to him, many of which are preserved in the State archives of Florence, are models of sense, wisdom, and the strongest affection combined. Her portrait by Vasari (Plate XLVIII.) is sure to be a good likeness, as he knew her well.

While Giovanni was absent on his almost perpetual campaigns she remained living in her father's palace in the Corso at Florence, where in 1519 her son, Cosimo, was born. During the next three years, Giovanni, having attained command of a troop, was mounting by rapid steps in his profession, and gaining great distinction owing to his invariable success wherever employed, so that the occasions when he was able to be with her were few. And when in 1523 Pope Adrian VI. was succeeded by Clement VII. this became still more the case. By this time her young husband, all whose youthful aspirations she had shared as a girl, had become one of the most renowned commanders in Italy, and she saw less and less of him. But this did not in any way prevent his being her one consideration at all times, and wherever we hear of her she seems to have no other care or interest but his well-being. Her life had in it much sadness, for, seeing plainly Pope Clement's manœuvres to oust Giovanni from his rights and to keep him always in the field in the hope that he would eventually get killed, she

PLATE XLVIII.

MARIA SALVIATI, WIFE OF GIOVANNI DELLE BANDE NERE.
By Vasari.

*Alinari*] [*Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.*

yet found it impossible to get Giovanni to guard his own interests, while she also lived in perpetual dread of hearing of his death. And the higher he rose in his profession, and the more the cloud of war spread over northern Italy (as it did almost uninterruptedly during the last three years of his life), the more impossible did it become for Giovanni to give any attention to his domestic affairs, or to be with the wife who loved him so devotedly.

Maria Salviati reveals herself completely to us in her letters, and the more we see of her the more attractive she becomes. M. Gautier calls her, "This wife who remained always a lover; a modern woman of passion and nerves, out of place among these suits of armour, these swords, and noises of war."[1] And again and again, after quoting long extracts from her letters, he exclaims: "Such tenderness, such womanly words!" In a touching letter to Giovanni in reference to a quarrel he had got into, she implores him to keep out of such broils, and "not to destroy us both by these frequent quarrels," and signs herself "Your desolate wife, who commends herself to you with face covered with tears." At the same time she is far from being weak; and one knows not which to admire the most, her great love for her warrior husband, her pleading tenderness, her gentle reproach, her ceaseless solicitude for his welfare, or her sagacious wisdom and strong common-sense. The tender pathos of many of her letters is indescribable. She knew that in the years before he was twenty-five he was, while absent at Rome, often unfaithful to her, and that she was supplanted

[1] *Jean des Bandes Noires*, by M. Pierre Gautier.

by low rivals. And in her letters written at that time it is the peculiar combination of this knowledge (of which she speaks openly), of tender reproach to him for treating her so, and yet of an unswerving affection, care for his welfare, and sensible advice to keep him out of this or that quarrel, which makes them so singularly touching.

Giovanni spent nearly all his private funds on his troops, and, as previously noted, Maria was continually occupied in providing what he required, though it was often difficult to find the necessary money. And that he thus relied upon her to purchase for him such things as horses, arms, and other military equipment shows how well he knew her sound sense and judgment.

At last the news came which she had all along dreaded, and she heard of his being mortally wounded, which news was followed almost immediately by that of his death. His friend, Pietro Aretino, writes to her of how he had himself put Giovanni's body in its coffin, telling her of his own great grief, which, however, he says, must be far less than hers. He describes the funeral at Mantua, and, with a fine touch of sympathy for the desolate wife, speaks of how "the women gazed from the windows with awe and reverence upon the honoured form of him who was your husband, signora, and my lord." Maria replies by a striking letter, dignified and sensible, saying what a comfort it had been to her throughout the campaign to feel that he was with her husband; and then she urges him to write the history of her husband's life, suggesting that he shall write the history of its last fourteen years,

and she, with the help of her father, will write that of the first fourteen years.[1] And she ends by a request that he "will commend myself and my poor Cosimo to the Marquis of Mantua, who has been so kind." Reading these letters of Maria's, it is hard to realise that it is all so long ago; we feel that it might have happened yesterday. Here, as so often, we feel how much closer the sixteenth century is to us than, *e.g.*, the eighteenth.

For the next ten years (1527-1537)—*i.e.*, during the three years of the revolt of Florence from Pope Clement, the year of the siege, and the reign of Alessandro as Duke—Maria Salviati lived in the greatest retirement at Trebbia, in the Mugello, about twenty miles from Florence, devoting herself to the education of her son, Cosimo. The only occasion on which she came out of this retirement was in 1533, when, as Catherine de' Medici's nearest relative, she accompanied the latter to Marseilles for her marriage. Maria lived this retired life for two reasons; not only was she left very badly off, most of their patrimony having been absorbed by her husband's military necessities, but also she lived in constant fear for her son now that the elder branch had no legitimate male descendant, knowing well that both Pope Clement and Alessandro were utterly unscrupulous, and looked with no friendly eye on one whose existence might be supposed to be an obstacle to Alessandro's being ruler of Florence. The only other male representative of the younger branch besides her son was Lorenzino; and Alessandro knew that the latter possessed no

[1] It is a pity that Maria's excellent suggestion was not carried out.

influence, and would never set up any claim to the rule of Florence. But it might be otherwise with a son of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, to whom his father's name and reputation would give plenty of adherents. Not that Maria had any desire at all that such claims should be put forward on behalf of her son; her gallant soldier's death ended all life for her; and she felt a complete repugnance for the strivings of ambition and worldly honours. She became a member of the Third Order of St Dominic, giving herself up to charitable works; and she kept her son out of sight of Florence and its affairs, training him to take pleasure in field sports and a country life, and secluding him so effectually as far as Florence was concerned that the mass of the citizens scarcely knew that such a youth existed.

The poverty to which she had been reduced is shown by a letter of hers written in 1530 to Filippo Strozzi, the wealthy banker, and head of the Strozzi family, who was one of her creditors. She says:—

"Magnificent and much respected Sir,—We are, my son and I, to that degree impoverished and broken down, not only by private debts but by those due to the Government, that we are in a desperate position, unless we can find some one who will assist us until we can get breathing time. We therefore suppliantly entreat your magnificence that if the other creditors press and crush us you will have the more pity on us; and, as you have had from us two hundred ducats up to this time, that you will be content to bear with us for this year. I declare to you on my faith that it is impossible for us to do more; and I will use every

effort to meet you in such a manner as you will find satisfactory at the end of the time named. I implore and beseech your excellency, and with all my heart beg of you, not to deny us this favour. For should you decide otherwise, and determine on pressing us, I know of no means of meeting your claim. We will not the less strive our utmost to put together another two hundred ducats within this year, if it be any way possible, and if you will not have patience with us for the entire debt. Our gratitude will be greater should you give us one year's time for the whole sum. Yet it will be no less if you will content yourself with the two hundred ducats. I will say no more, save that Cosimo and I commend ourselves earnestly to your magnificence.

Your cousin and sister,
Maria Salviati de' Medici."

At length, when Maria had been a widow for ten years, and when her son Cosimo was seventeen and a half years old, there occurred in January 1537 Duke Alessandro's sudden assassination;[1] whereupon her son suddenly, and without consulting her, made his bold bid for power.[2] His mother liked neither the thing itself nor his methods, and endeavoured to persuade him to abandon the course on which he had embarked; which greatly enraged him. And the cruelty which a few months later he displayed against those who had opposed him still more deeply pained his gentle-spirited and high-minded mother, strengthening her strong disapproval of his whole course of action. This caused a complete estrangement between them; from the time he became Duke of Florence he never went

[1] Vol. i. p. 506.
[2] *See* chap. xxiv. pp. 236-237.

near her; and she suffered many things from his harsh and unlovely disposition. On her son becoming head of the State, she removed from Trebbia to the villa at Castello, where her husband had lived as a boy, and there resided during the remaining six years of her life, seldom seeing any one, and devoting herself to religion and good works. Her son's conduct was the last drop of sadness in a life which had been always sad; while we are told that Cosimo displayed towards her "such an utter want of affection that even when she was lying ill at the villa of Castello, and he was shooting in the vicinity, he could hardly be persuaded to relinquish the pleasures of the chase for a single day to visit her on her death-bed." A few days later her gentle spirit passed away.

Maria Salviati died at Castello in 1543, six years after her son became Duke of Florence, and was buried dressed in the habit of the Third Order of St Dominic. In after years her remains were removed from their first resting-place to be laid beside those of her husband when brought from Mantua.[1] When the Medici coffins were opened in 1857 her body was found unimpaired; her coffin bore only her simple name "Maria."[2] She and Giovanni delle Bande Nere lie side by side in the centre of the crypt of the great family mausoleum, with round them their descendants, the grand dukes and grand duchesses, princes and princesses, of Tuscany.

[1] Chap. xxix. p. 470.

[2] "The body was found embalmed, and was dressed in black as a nun. The head rested on two bricks. Upon the coffin among many crosses was inscribed the name 'Maria.'" (*Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum.* 1857.)

# CHAPTER XXIV

## COSIMO I.

*Born* 1519. { *Reigned*, 1537-1574 / *Created Grand Duke of Tuscany*, 1569 } *Died* 1574.

When on the 5th January 1537 Alessandro's sudden death took place, all was for some days in great confusion, since, the Signoria having been abolished,[1] Florence was left by the Duke's death without any government. Moreover, there were none left on whom it devolved to form one. Pope Clement VII., Ippolito, and now Alessandro, were all dead; no male descendant of the elder branch of the Medici family remained; neither the Strozzi, Guicciardini, Ridolfi, nor any other family in Florence felt themselves capable of assuming the place which had been taken by the Medici; while the reigning Pope (Paul III.) had no particular interest in Florentine affairs. So that there seemed no reason why Florence should not reinstate her Republic; and as those in charge of the fortresses were ready to agree to it, everything appeared to point to this course. It was, however, not adopted. The Council called the Forty-eight still nominally existed, though under Alessandro it had had no power; and whilst its leading members were discussing the situation, and before anything definite had been decided upon, there appeared in Florence from the district of the Mugello an almost unknown youth of seventeen,

[1] Vol. i. p. 478.

Cosimo, son of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, accompanied by one or two attendants. Failing Lorenzino himself, who had fled and made no claim to the rule, this youth was (supposing a republic was not going to be set up) rightfully heir to the succession; while from one point of view his claim might be considered superior to any which could be put forward on behalf of Lorenzino, in that, his mother being a granddaughter of Lorenzo the Magnificent, *both* branches of the Medici united in him.[1]

This youth, by his artful assumption of a humble demeanour, by the little that was known of him seeming to indicate that he was not likely to take a prominent part in affairs of State, and by his promises that if he were appointed to the rule all power should remain in the hands of the Council, induced the chief senators to accept him as the head of the State. We are told that he "concealed his ambition under so humble and submissive a demeanour as to provoke the contempt of his friends." The four principal senators Guicciardini, Strozzi, Valori, and Acciajuoli, were completely taken in, and chose him with the idea that he was a youth of little character, whose interests chiefly centred in shooting and field sports, and that he would be a nonentity, and would leave them to rule the country. Accordingly he was elected as chief of the State, it being definitely laid down that all power was to rest with the Council. A bas-relief showing this episode is to be seen on the pedestal of the equestrian statue of Cosimo I. in the Piazza della Signoria, and very faithfully reproduces the unassuming attitude which was

[1] *See* Appendix I.

THE COUNCIL OFFERING COSIMO THE RULE OF FLORENCE.
Bas-relief by Gian da Bologna.

*Brogi*]

adopted by Cosimo.[1] Thus did Francesco Guicciardini, Filippo Strozzi, Baccio Valori, and Niccolò Acciajuoli, in order to obtain their own personal ends, deliver over their country to an iron-handed tyrant; Guicciardini, the chief of them, mainly so acting because he hoped that Cosimo would marry his daughter Lisabetta, and that he (Guicciardini) would rule Florence while the young head of the State amused himself. They all had bitter cause in a very short time to repent their action. Simultaneously with this election a decree was, at Cosimo's request, passed by the Council putting the whole of Lorenzino's branch out of the succession in consequence of his murder of Alessandro, Cosimo pointing out that this was advisable in order to make his position unimpeachable.

No sooner, however, was Cosimo installed as chief of the State than he threw off the mask which he had worn. He cast all these councillors aside, assumed absolute authority, and showed himself in his true colours as an arbitrary tyrant who intended to rule by fear. He soon became the most dreaded man in Florence.

Of course, such an entire reversal of all that had been contemplated was bound to issue in a struggle. Before many months were over Cosimo's tyrannical actions had driven a large number of the citizens into voluntary exile, including Filippo Strozzi and Baccio Valori,[2] and by the end of the summer of 1537 these *fuorusciti* had assembled an army to dethrone him,

[1] Plate XLIX.

[2] Francesco Guicciardini did not join the rest, but retired from Florence in disgust to his villa in Arcetri, and occupied himself in writing his celebrated history.

for which purpose they had also gained the help of a considerable body of French troops. The main portion of their forces consisted of four thousand infantry and three hundred cavalry commanded by Filippo Strozzi's eldest son, Piero Strozzi, already a distinguished soldier. Meanwhile Cosimo had also got together a force, and by representing himself as the successor of the Emperor's vassal Alessandro, had obtained the assistance of the imperial troops in Tuscany. His whole force was under the command of Alessandro Vitelli. The battle to decide the fate of Tuscany was fought at Montemurlo, near Prato, on the 1st August 1537; it resulted in Vitelli's gaining a victory which saved Cosimo, and delivered all his opponents into his hands. Vittelli's success was chiefly due to a fortunate accident. The body of troops attacked by him were in reality only the advanced guard of the enemy's force, their main body under Piero Strozzi being away at a distance in the mountains; but with the body defeated by Vitelli were Filippo Strozzi, Baccio Valori, and all the principal men of the party opposed to Cosimo, all of whom were captured. The main body with Piero Strozzi only heard of the defeat of the troops at Montemurlo, with the capture of all the leaders, when the battle was over and it was too late to do anything; and Piero Strozzi had no course but to retire. The column which stands in the Piazza St Trinità, surmounted by a fine figure of Justice, was erected by Cosimo[1] to commemorate this victory of Montemurlo which gave him his throne.

[1] It was erected about twenty-five years afterwards. The column came from the Baths of Caracalla in Rome, and was presented to Cosimo by Pope Pius IV., who was Pope from 1559-1564.

The Bargello.

Of all the buildings in Florence one possesses a more solemn interest than any other—interest of the same kind as attaches to the Tower of London—namely, the gloomy citadel of the Bargello.[1] Terrible have been the scenes which its courtyard (the place of execution) and surrounding cells have witnessed; piteous the cries with which its torture-chamber, now the armoury (where is the only oubliette[2] in Florence), has resounded; heart-breaking the grief endured in the open *loggia*[3] overlooking the courtyard where so many bitter wrongs have had their cruel ending.[4] None can climb its picturesque staircase, or traverse its halls, insensible to the tragic memories which cling round this ancient fortress of the Podestà of Florence, where so many who were notable have taken their last look on life. And the victory of Montemurlo added many to these sad memories which attach to the Bargello. For Cosimo had set up a despotism no less severe than that of the kings of England and France of

[1] Plate L.

[2] Its trap-door is near the central pillar of the hall. Out of it were taken a large number of human bones.

[3] Whence George Eliot describes Romola watching the execution of her godfather.

[4] This applies to the period of the Podestà (1200-1494), and of his successor, the Bargello, or head of the police (1537-1782), from whom the building takes its present name; but does not apply to the years 1494-1537, during which period the Bargello (or Executor of Justice) resided, and carried out executions and torture, in a building which now forms the back part of the Palazzo Vecchio, and had its entrance in the Via de' Gondi. And it was in this latter building, and not in the present Bargello, that in 1497 Bernardo del Nero was put to death. Cosimo I. removed the Executor of Justice (the Bargello) to the old citadel of the Podestà, which thus again became the chief prison and place of execution, and remained so during the rest of Florentine history. The scaffold was by the well in the centre of the courtyard. It and all the instruments of torture were burnt by the Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo in 1782.

that time; and to be consigned to the Bargello was apt to be as fatal to the person concerned as to be committed to the Tower or to the Bastille.

The prisoners taken at Montemurlo were very numerous and of high rank, for there was scarcely one of the leading families of Florence which had not some member among them, or a Florentine student at Bologna or Padua who had not joined Filippo Strozzi and Baccio Valori in this attempt. Many of them were quite young, and not a few were Cosimo's personal friends; but they received no mercy, for in Cosimo that quality was non-existent. The cells of the Bargello were crowded with prisoners of distinction; and when the Bargello could hold no more, the remainder were sent to the Fortezza. The prisoners were executed in batches day after day, while the halls rang with the cries of the tortured; not one was pardoned; all were in turn first tortured and then executed. Baccio Valori and his son, with young Albizzi, were among those thus put to death at the Bargello. Filippo Strozzi, confined in irony in the Fortezza, to build which he had provided the funds, was either put to death there, or committed suicide to escape further torture, his body being found in his cell transfixed with a sword. Thus ended the rich, handsome, and accomplished courtier and banker, Filippo Strozzi,[1] the husband of Clarice de Medici, and the friend of popes and kings, to whom only seven years before Cosimo's mother had written that humble petition on behalf of Cosimo and herself for time in which to pay their

[1] There is a fine portrait of Filippo Strozzi by Titian at Vienna.

COURTYARD OF THE BARGELLO.

debt. Cosimo confiscated the Strozzi palace in the Via Tornabuoni and the whole of Filippo Strozzi's possessions.[1] Piero il Gottoso seventy years before had contrived to put down an armed rebellion against himself without the sacrifice of a single life; Cosimo I. seemed anxious to create the greatest contrast possible, for of all the enemies who fell into his hands he did not spare a single life. No wonder that Maria Salviati, looking with horror on these proceedings of her son which she was powerless to prevent, shut herself up in deepest seclusion at the villa of Castello.

Cosimo was, in fact, a most unusual character. Neither his mother nor any of those around him up to the age of seventeen were in the least prepared for the action which he then suddenly took. The bold stroke by which he seized upon the rule of Florence astounded Maria Salviati, and was as great a revelation of character to her as to every one else. How completely he had contrived to hide his real nature from all those who knew him as a boy[2] is shown by the case of Filippo Strozzi, who, though he had been on intimate terms with him and his mother while they resided at Trebbia, was nevertheless as much taken in as the other senators. Cosimo is perhaps the only instance on record of a boy, hitherto occupying an obscure position, given up to sport and a country life, and thought to have little capacity, suddenly casting aside every boyish taste, undertaking the arduous labours of government,

[1] He returned the palace to the family before his death.

[2] There is a portrait in fresco of Cosimo as a boy on the wall of the Sala di Giovanni delle Bande Nere in the Palazzo Vecchio, painted by his contemporary Vasari.

seizing the rule of his country from her wisest and ablest men, and slaughtering wholesale her leading citizens.

But although Cosimo thus showed himself a cruel and merciless tyrant, in his subsequent history he manifested extraordinary abilities; with results for which his country had every reason to be grateful. It is, indeed, little short of marvellous how one who, silent and taciturn by nature, had in his youth been considered "dull," "timid," and "wanting in character," yet developed the capacity to raise Tuscany to the highest pitch of political importance and general well-being which she ever reached. Tuscany, which ever since the time of Lorenzo the Magnificent, under the successive maladministration of Soderini, Lorenzo (Duke of Urbino), Passerini, the Republican Government of 1527-1530, and Alessandro, had for over forty years possessed little or no political importance in Italy, was by Cosimo I. raised to a higher position in this respect among the states of Italy than she had occupied even in the time of Lorenzo the Magnificent. The glory of the leadership in Art and Learning was no longer hers; the joy and brightness of the Renaissance were for ever passed away, overwhelmed in the wars which for more than a generation had raged over Italy; but in so far as the remaining factors of political influence, military strength, and commercial progress were concerned, Cosimo I. raised Tuscany, not merely to her former level, but beyond it; so much so that she became under him the only state of first-

class importance in Italy. Cosimo Pater Patriae and Lorenzo the Magnificent had gloried in advancing the boundaries of the State, but under Cosimo I. Tuscany was almost doubled in size; while at the same time the conditions in regard to the administration of justice, and the general advancement of the country, were changed from those customary in the Middle Ages to those thought necessary in modern times. And Cosimo did all this himself; for his principle was to avoid taking any councillors, and throughout his life those whom he employed to assist him were nothing more than secretaries, and none were given a sufficient power of initiative for their names to have obtained any record in history. They were invariably men of a humble station in life, and always chosen from other parts of the country than Florence.

As soon as Cosimo had, by the victory of Montemurlo and the execution of all who had opposed him, firmly secured his power, he set about arrangements for that gradual advancement of his position which he had set before him. As yet he had merely been elected by the Florentines as head of their state; so that his first step was to endeavour to obtain formal recognition of his position by the Emperor. Representing himself as willing to be the Emperor's vassal, and ready to promote his cause in every way against the French interest in Italy, he obtained what he sought, the Emperor issuing a Diploma which conferred on Cosimo "all the authority formerly borne and exercised by Duke Alessandro." And

though the Diploma did not categorically confer on Cosimo the title of Duke, the latter from this time forth always signed himself "Duca di Fiorenza," to which no exception was taken by the Emperor. In this connection it is interesting to notice that in the rooms lately reopened on the upper floor of the Palazzo Vecchio, over the sixteenth century fireplace in Cosimo's room his title is to be seen inscribed as "Cosimus Florie Dux II."; showing that at this time in his life (previous to his obtaining the status of Grand Duke, making him Cosimo I.) he called himself "Dux II.," the second Duke of Florence, the first being Alessandro.

Cosimo's next step was to set about arrangements for a marriage such as would contribute to the strength of his position. He first endeavoured strenuously to get the Emperor to give him his daughter Margaret, Alessandro's young widow; but this Charles V. absolutely refused to do, while at the same time insisting on Cosimo's making over to Margaret a very large portion of the Medici property, much to Cosimo's indignation. This first matrimonial project having failed, the latter turned elsewhere, and in 1539 succeeded in arranging a marriage for himself with Eleonora, the only child of Don Pedro di Toledo, Marquis of Villafranca and Viceroy of Naples, the most capable and trusted of all the Emperor's lieutenants, who ruled the kingdom of Naples from 1532 till his death in 1553. Eleonora di Toledo was escorted to Florence by Don Pedro himself, and they were met by Cosimo at the villa of Poggio a Caiano, fifteen

miles from Florence. The Viceroy of Naples and his suite were lodged during their stay in Florence in the monastery of St Maria Novella,[1] and after many festivities Cosimo and Eleonora were married with much ceremony in the church of San Lorenzo, he being then twenty and she seventeen. Eleonora was very rich, and her wealth, together with the political influence which Cosimo gained by becoming the son-in-law of the Viceroy of Naples, made a considerable difference in his position. The portrait of Eleonora by Bronzino[2] on the wall of one of the rooms in the Palazzo Vecchio shows her as she was at about the age of twenty, two or three years after her marriage. She has a fine broad forehead and a pleasing face.

Up to this time Cosimo had lived in the Medici palace in the Via Larga; and it was there that he brought home his bride. But shortly after making this marriage Cosimo removed into the Palazzo Vecchio, having the rooms on the second floor, which had been those always occupied by the Gonfaloniere, handsomely decorated for Eleonora's reception. He had several reasons for this change of residence, but his principal one was that the Medici palace was not a defensible castle, and possessed no accommodation for the bodyguard of troops necessary to protect his person; while his occupation of the Palazzo Vecchio, which for centuries had been associated in the minds of the

[1] It was on this occasion that the well-known "Spanish chapel" (formerly the chapter-house) in the Green Cloister of Santa Maria Novella obtained its name, owing to its being made over for the use of the Viceroy of Naples and his numerous suite during their stay in Florence.

[2] Plate LI.

Florentines with the governing body, not only gave him a more secure abode, but also emphasised the fact that he, and he alone, now wielded the entire power of the State.[1] Other rulers around him, such as the Este at Ferrara, or the Gonzaga at Mantua, each occupied their "Castello" in the centre of their capital city, and no other residence was in fact suitable for a despotic ruler such as Cosimo desired all men to recognise that he intended to be. Immediately at the door of his palace, and passed daily by him, stood Donatello's statue of *Judith slaying Holofernes*, with the inscription which the citizens had placed on it "as a warning to all who might attempt to tyrannise over Florence"; and this Cosimo suffered to remain as it was, in grim irony at the wide contrast between the sentiment expressed by the inscription and the rule which he had established. His bodyguard of Swiss lancers he placed, during the hours that they were on duty,[2] in Orcagna's Loggia, which thus acquired the name by which it has always since been known of the "Loggia de' Lanzi." The Palazzo Vecchio was a somewhat restricted and gloomy abode for Eleonora, but Cosimo had other plans for the future, and intended arranging for himself and Eleonora a much larger and grander residence later on when he should feel sufficiently firmly established. Meanwhile, by incorporating the buildings on the

[1] From which it is noticeable how exactly opposite were the aims of Cosimo I. to those, *e.g.*, of Lorenzo the Magnificent, to whose principles nothing would have been more repugnant than conduct of this character; witness his dying advice to his son Pietro.

[2] They lived in barracks situated in the small street immediately behind Orcagna's Loggia, the Via Lambertesca.

PLATE LI.

ELEONORA DI TOLEDO, WIFE OF COSIMO I., AT TWENTY.
By Bronzino.

*Alinari*] [*Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.*

COSIMO I.
By Bronzino.

*Brogi*] [*Pitti Gallery.*

eastern side, including the residences of the Esecutore di Giustizia and the Capitano dei Fanti, he considerably enlarged the Palazzo Vecchio; and he and Eleonora lived there for ten years, six of their eight children being born there.[1]

But until he had an army of his own, independent alike of any troops lent him by the Emperor and of Florentine levies, Cosimo could not feel secure. Added to which he had views in the future of extending the boundaries of Tuscany when opportunity should offer, and for this a powerful army would be necessary. He therefore gradually raised a force of Swiss, German, and Italian troops (the latter recruited from other parts of Italy than Tuscany), and soon had a small but strong army, which he steadily increased in numbers. In order to strengthen his hold on Florence he also much enlarged the Fortezza, and augmented the number of troops quartered there.

By the above means Cosimo by the time he was twenty-one had firmly established himself as despotic ruler of Tuscany. Bronzino's portrait of him in the Pitti Gallery[2] (one of the best portraits that Bronzino ever executed), painted, Vasari tells us, when Cosimo was forty, accords closely with the description of his appearance given by contemporary writers; these state that his face gave no indication of the great abilities which he possessed, and that he had "a dark and impenetrable disposition," with a power of fierce and relentless anger, all the more terrible because it burnt under the surface.

[1] Maria, their eldest child, was born in the Medici palace in the Via Larga.

[2] Plate LII.

For the first ten years of his reign Cosimo was chiefly occupied in strengthening his position as Duke of Florence. The three main factors in European politics were, as before, Francis I., Charles V., and the Pope (Paul III.). During the years 1536 and 1537 the latter had continued to labour earnestly to bring about peace between the two antagonists,[1] but for some time without avail. At length in June 1538 he got both Charles and Francis to come to Nice; though they would not meet, and the Pope had to conduct negotiations by personally visiting them alternately. So that much credit is due to him for the success he eventually achieved in getting them to agree to a truce which caused a cessation of the conflict for four years. At the end of that time, however, they were again at war, and Cosimo had to choose his side. Abandoning the traditional Florentine policy of alliance with France, Cosimo throughout his reign threw himself heart and soul on the side of the Emperor, opposing the operations of the French in Italy on all occasions. At the same time, beginning as the Emperor's vassal, he gradually purchased his independence. When the war between Francis and Charles was resumed in 1542, and five separate French armies invaded Charles's territories, the Emperor, to raise troops to meet this attack, borrowed money largely from Cosimo,[2] who in return obtained the withdrawal of the imperial garrisons from Florence and Pisa. The same process was repeated on several subsequent occasions, Cosimo taking a step further in the same direction each time that the Emperor was

[1] Vol. i. p. 502.

[2] *See* p. 286.

in need of funds, until he attained entire independence. Nevertheless, after he had done so he still continued the same policy of always siding with the Emperor and against the French, so that he came eventually to be Charles V.'s mainstay in Italy; while the accessions of territory which from time to time the Emperor helped him to acquire, by increasing Cosimo's power increased also Charles's feeling of security as regards Italy.

In 1544 peace was for a time made between Francis and Charles at Crépy. And in December 1545 the Council of the Church which had been talked of for so many years at last assembled at Trent. It, however, failed to possess the character which had been intended; for instead of the two parties in the dispute being present, only one of them was represented at it, neither the Church of England nor the Protestant party in Germany and France sending any representatives to it. So that it became merely a Council of the Roman Church, and as such lost all interest for Europe as a whole.

In 1546 the Strozzi brothers, who had never ceased to seek vengeance against Cosimo for their father's death, made an attack on him, with the assistance of Francesco Burlamacchi, from Lucca; but the attempt failed. In 1547 the long triangular duel, which had lasted for over a quarter of a century, came to an end by the death in the early part of that year of two of the antagonists, Henry VIII. and Francis I.,[1] just when Francis was preparing a fresh attack upon Charles. This removal of his two rivals materially increased

[1] Henry VIII. died in January, and Francis I. in March. Luther died in the same year.

Charles V.'s power, as all states in Italy soon felt, and in particular the Pope. The attempt of the latter to introduce the Inquisition (which he had established in Rome in 1542) into Naples was defeated, Charles refusing to allow it. The Pope was also endeavouring to get the Council of Trent removed to some city in Italy, and intriguing for this purpose with the French against Charles; but in this, as in all his undertakings, he found a strong opponent in Cosimo, whose state of Tuscany was rapidly becoming the strongest in Italy. At this time we find Cosimo tendering remarkable advice to Charles V., urging him, in a letter of the 6th February 1547, "to use his power for a complete reform of the Church through the Council, taking away the tyranny of the priests, reducing the power of the Pope to its proper spiritual limits, and restoring the pure faith of Christ without the abuses that had grown up about it."[1] Whilst all those in Italy who were in opposition to the Emperor looked naturally to the Pope for assistance, "in the young Duke Cosimo," says Ranke, "Paul III. found the very man best fitted to oppose him." And Cosimo himself, in a letter about this time, says:—

"The Pope, who has succeeded in so many undertakings, has now no wish more earnest than of doing something in Florence as well; he would fain estrange this state from the Emperor, but this is a hope he shall carry with him to his grave."

In this year, 1547, Cosimo managed to remove from his path a danger which had from the first

[1] *The Cambridge Modern History*, vol. ii. p. 82.

threatened him. The decree which he had obtained at the time of his election, putting Lorenzino's branch of the family out of the succession, still left him with a feeling of insecurity, as it was always open to his enemies to get up an agitation to dethrone him on the ground that Lorenzino was the lawful head of the family and the rightful ruler of Florence. Lorenzino's death was therefore much to be desired, and Cosimo had long tried to achieve it, but without success. Lorenzino, after many wanderings in France, Turkey, and other countries, had eventually settled with his mother, Maria Soderini, at Venice, where he lived in constant fear of his life, knowing that Cosimo was employing the most skilled assassins to dog his steps. Knowing the dangers which were around him in the narrow little streets, he seldom trusted himself anywhere outside his house except in a gondola. At length one night in 1547 he was caught unawares in a narrow street by two hired assassins employed by Cosimo, and murdered. The account of how they killed him was related by themselves, and may be read in full detail in various records of the time. Cosimo's plea for this act was that he was only carrying out a just execution of Lorenzino for the murder of Alessandro. Throughout his life he adopted the same attitude on this subject. The view that Lorenzino's act was inspired by a desire to liberate his country, by creating sympathy with Lorenzino, militated seriously against Cosimo's usurpation of the rule of Florence; while it might inspire others to similar action against himself. And it was in order to excite a feeling against Lorenzino, and to

extinguish, if possible, the above view of his act (though no other reason for the deed could ever be produced), that Cosimo on coming to power had the house broken down,[1] and that he and his successors, the Grand Dukes, endeavoured in all ways to heap as much odium as possible on Lorenzino's name. With the result that Lorenzino has been handed down to us, not as he was looked upon by his contemporaries, viz., as "the Florentine Brutus," but as one on whom every abusive epithet may freely be cast.

In 1548 Cosimo succeeded in performing an important service for Charles V. The republic of Siena had revolted from the latter, driven out his representative and the Spanish garrison, and placed themselves under the protection of the Pope. Cosimo offered to mediate between the two parties, which was accepted; and he was so successful that he was able to pacify the Sienese, and arrange an agreement that Siena's ancient form of government should be respected by the Emperor, while a representative of the latter with a Spanish garrison should be admitted.

Both France and the Pope were now preparing to attack the Emperor, and he was strengthening himself in every way in Italy for the conflict. As one measure to that end the harbour of Portoferrajo and the adjacent district in the island of Elba was given to Cosimo, and he in a short time made Portoferrajo the strongest naval station in the Mediterranean. He was also allowed to occupy Piombino for a time to assist him in defending his own coast line near Pisa, and gained various

[1] Vol. i. p. 510.

accessions of territory along the coast. In 1549 Pope Paul III. died; and since his successor, Julius III., adopted a more amicable policy towards the Emperor, this tended to create peace in Italy.

The Pitti Palace (1).

In ten years from the time of his marriage Cosimo had so firmly established his rule that he felt able to occupy a different kind of residence from the Palazzo Vecchio; while this change was the more desirable since he and Eleonora had now seven children, the eldest of them being nine years old. Accordingly early in 1550 Cosimo, imitating the ancestor after whom he had been named,[1] set about building a new palace for the family, that which is now the royal palace in Florence; and which, though known to us as the Pitti Palace,[2] was (except as below) entirely built by the Medici, and was their home during two hundred years.

To carry out this purpose Cosimo bought, with Eleonora's money, the estate covering the north-western slope of the Boboli hill, on the southern side of the Arno, together with, at the foot of the hill, the portion of the palace which had been begun, more than eighty years before, by Luca Pitti, but which that family had never had money enough to finish. This when Cosimo bought it consisted only of the small centre portion of the

[1] Vol. i. p. 65.

[2] The name "Pitti Palace" is an invention of modern times. The palace was of course never called by this name in the time of the Medici. Throughout their time their palace was called the Ducal Palace, the Grand Ducal Palace, or latterly (in the time of Cosimo III. and Gian Gastone) the Royal Palace.

present building embraced by the three centre arches of the ground floor[1] and the seven windows above them; it was only completed up to the top of the first floor, and was still unroofed, leaving more than half the building (even as it existed in Cosimo I.'s reign) to be completed. Except this small nucleus the whole of the palace as we see it was built by the Medici. Cosimo, assisted by his able architect Ammanati, completed this centre portion up to the roof, but without extending it laterally; which alone suffices to show that the present central court did not exist even in his time.[2] The estate and the unfinished building upon it were sold to Cosimo by Buonaccorso Pitti for 9,000 gold florins.

It is generally stated that the Pitti Palace is built on the design which had, one hundred years before, been drawn up by Brunelleschi for Luca Pitti. But this (while of course totally incorrect as regards all the rest of the palace[3]) is an error even as regards the comparatively small portion of it which formed the Ducal palace in Cosimo's time, and which scarcely amounts to one sixth of the whole building. For Buonaccorso Pitti, when selling the property was unable to supply Cosimo with Brunelleschi's design, this having in the lapse of years been lost. Nor even had it been forthcoming would a building designed to accommodate an ordinary citizen family in 1440 have sufficed, a hundred years later, for the residence of the Duke of Florence and his court.

[1] All three of these were at that time *doorways*; the only *windows* on the ground floor were the four small square barred ones.

[2] *See* p. 416 and footnote.

[3] *See* chap. xxvii. p. 375, and chap. xxviii. pp. 413-417.

THE PITTI PALACE.

*Of the twenty-three windows along the front only twenty-two are visible in this picture. The size of the palace is entirely dwarfed in the picture owing to its not being possible to get a point sufficiently far back from which to photograph so large a building, as well as to the side wall of the central block, at right angles to the front, being unseen (see plan, and Plate LXXIX.)*

A LADY OF THE DUCAL COURT.

(Showing the Palace as completed by Cosimo I.)

*Alinari* *Uffizi Gallery.*

Be this as it may, Cosimo's palace when completed consisted only of the comparatively small central portion of the front block of the present palace.[1] When thus finished by him it was a plain oblong building, three stories high, with seven windows on the front which faces the Via Romana, and without either the central court or the two great wings on either side of the latter (running back at right angles to the façade) which now form the great central block of the palace.[2] Thus in Cosimo's and Eleonora's time the palace had a very different aspect from the immense building to which we are accustomed, including as it did only that portion of the façade[3] which is embraced by the seven centre windows. This is remarkably corroborated by a little known picture occupying a dark corner in the long corridor between the Pitti and Uffizi galleries.[4] It shows the portrait of a lady of the ducal court with, in the background, a picture of the ducal palace, demonstrating very plainly what its dimensions were in the time of Cosimo I. The picture, owing to its background, is labelled "A lady of the Pitti family"; but the background itself refutes this, for the palace is represented as *completed and roofed*, which at once proves that the time is subsequent to that at which the building had any connection with the Pitti family, and that we are here shown the palace as it was after being completed by Cosimo I. The picture consequently represents, not a lady of the Pitti family, but "A lady of the

[1] *See* plan shown in Appendix XIV.
[2] *See* Plate LXXIX.
[3] Plate LIII.
[4] Plate LIV. (a lady of the ducal court).

ducal court."[1] In the beginning of the year 1553 the work was sufficiently far advanced to allow of the new palace being occupied, and Cosimo and Eleonora with their seven children moved into it.[2]

The Boboli Gardens.

Cosimo, who was extremely fond of elaborately planned gardens, and was the founder of the Botanical Gardens at Pisa[3] and the Giardino Botannico de' Semplici at Florence, took the greatest pleasure in laying out, with the help of Tribolo and Buontalenti, the magnificent gardens behind his new palace, extending up the slope of the Boboli hill and covering an immense area;[4] while to Eleonora and her children the change must have been great after the confined precincts of the Palazzo Vecchio. And as in these beautiful gardens we traverse the long avenues of cypress, ilex, and stone pine, or follow the shady pathways amidst banks of roses and azaleas, or sit on the seats of the amphitheatre[5] overlooking the back of the palace, it is impossible not to think of those eight children of Cosimo and

[1] The palace continued of these same dimensions during the reigns of Francis I. and Ferdinand I., and as a matter of fact this lady is evidently of the time of Ferdinand I. For she wears the same very marked shape of dress noted as being worn by Christine of Lorraine and other ladies of that time (*see* p. 345). This makes the error of supposing that the palace in the background had any connection with the Pitti family still more marked.

[2] Their eighth child (Pietro) was born four years afterwards.

[3] The oldest botanical gardens in Europe.

[4] Owing to their situation on the slope of a hill, their great extent, the care with which they have been planned, and the beauty of the views which they command over the country surrounding Florence, the Boboli gardens have a charm which few others possess.

[5] *See* Plate LXXIX. The grassy space which the amphitheatre encloses was used for open-air festivities. The amphitheatre is large enough to accommodate 4,000 spectators. In the centre stands the only Egyptian obelisk which Florence possesses.

Eleonora who were the first of many families of children to play here, and of their chequered histories:—Maria, whose sad death at sixteen cast the first gloom over the family; Francis, unstable and unenergetic, who succeeded his father; Isabella, destined to die a tragic death at the age of thirty-four; Giovanni, whose death at nineteen was so severe a blow to his father's hopes; Lucrezia, married at fifteen, and dying at seventeen; Garzia, his mother's favourite son, whose death at sixteen was immediately followed by hers; Ferdinand, capable and full of energy, who succeeded his brother Francis, and carried on the Medici line; and Pietro, eight years old when his mother died, and either justly or unjustly accused of murdering his young wife when he was only twenty-two.[1] Looking at the palace where they all grew up one feels that its main interest will always be associated with this first generation of the family who lived here.

Fort of San Giorgio.

But Cosimo did not only lay out gardens in connection with his new palace. He intended that it should have a fortress in close proximity to it as well. Therefore, on the summit of the Boboli hill, at the extremity of the gardens, he laid out the lines of the fort of San Giorgio, also called the Forte di Belvedere. Placed so as to join the line of the city walls, and on a height more immediately overhanging the city than that of San Miniato, it commands the whole of Florence, besides completely defending it on the southern side. And this fort, when completed by

[1] Chap. xxv.

his son Ferdinand I., became the stronghold of the Medici family.

Art Collections.

Cosimo, soon after he had, by his marriage with Eleonora di Toledo, become rich enough to undertake such a quest, set about a diligent search for traces of the ancient Etruscans, making extensive excavations at Chiusi (the ancient Clusium), Arezzo, and other places in "Etruria" to search for specimens of Etruscan art; while at the same time he purchased all rare Etruscan and Egyptian antiquities which chance threw in his way. These efforts of his had important consequences. For this search for remains of the ancient inhabitants of Tuscany was continued by his descendants, producing an immense collection of most valuable and interesting specimens of the art of the Etruscans and objects revealing their mode of life. And these, combined with the Egyptian antiquities also gradually accumulated, resulted in the two collections which now form the Etruscan and Egyptian Museums of Florence,[1] the former being considered probably the finest Etruscan museum in the world. Among the numerous interesting remains of Etruscan art which Cosimo obtained from these excavations were the fine statue of *Minerva*, found near Arezzo in 1541, the celebrated *Chimaera*, found near Arezzo in 1554, and the statue known as *The Orator*, found near the Trasimene Lake in 1566, all being of bronze.[2] The most valuable of these

[1] *See* chap. xxxi. p. 502.

[2] The beautiful bronze statue worshipped in the third century before Christ as Apollo, and now called the *Idolino*, though found in Cosimo's time, did not come into this collection until 1779.

"finds" was the statue of the *Chimaera*, or fire-breathing monster, having the body of a lion, a goat's head springing from the back, and (for the tail) a serpent which is biting the goat's head—a statue contemporaneous with the *Wolf of Rome*. It was, however, held to be inauspicious to Florence,[1] and so was kept by Cosimo in his private room in the Palazzo Vecchio and not exhibited to the public.[2]

From the time that he moved into his new palace Cosimo began to turn his attention to the collection, with the assistance of Vasari and Bronzino,[3] of a gallery of pictures such as that which his ancestors had gathered round them in former days in the palace in the Via Larga. The plunder of the Medici art collections which had taken place in 1494, and again in 1527, had dissipated the collections made by the elder branch, scattering far and wide most of what had not been destroyed, valuable pictures which had been the property of the Medici having even found their way to France and Germany. But some portion of these art treasures were still in Florence, dispersed among different families, or hidden away elsewhere; and Cosimo had search made for these, and bought back as many of them as he could find for the embellishment of his new palace, including portraits of former members of the family, a few

[1] Because, being a lion wounded by Bellerophon, a connection was traced between it and the *Marzocco* of Florence, and to some evil portended to Florence.

[2] It is now, with all the rest, in the Etruscan Museum.

[3] Giorgio Vasari (1511-1576), the historian of the painters, sculptors, and architects, and himself also a painter and an architect, was Cosimo's right-hand man in all matters relating to art. Bronzino (1502-1572) was Cosimo's chief painter.

statues and busts, and objects of art such as the vases which had belonged to Lorenzo the Magnificent.[1] At the same time he set Bronzino to work to paint (from such materials as existed in the shape of representations on medallions, frescoes, or otherwise) the portraits of all the Medici from Giovanni di Bicci downwards. Bronzino carried out this work with great care and long labour, and the series of portraits of the older Medici which he thus painted for Cosimo, and which are now in the Uffizi Gallery, are among his best works. Vasari, who was also at work for Cosimo in other directions,[2] says:—

"In some small pictures painted on plates of copper, and all of the same size, he (Bronzino) painted all the great men of the house of Medici, beginning with Giovanni di Bicci and Cosimo the elder down to the Queen of France (Catherine) in that line; and in the other, from Lorenzo, brother of Cosimo the elder, down to Duke Cosimo and his children. The which portraits are behind the door of the studio made by Vasari in the apartments of the new rooms of the ducal palace."[3]

The two fine portraits of Cosimo I. and Eleonora di Toledo (Plates LII. and LVIII.) gave Bronzino the reputation of the best Florentine portrait painter of his time.

[1] Vol. i. p. 321.

[2] Vasari was occupied among other things in painting in fresco the walls of the rooms in the Palazzo Vecchio, including the Sala di Leone X., Sala di Clemente VII., Sala di Giovanni delle Bande Nere, and the great hall.

[3] These are the portraits shown in Plates II., III., XXI., XXXIII., XXXVI., XXXVII., XLII., XLIII., LII., LV., LVII., LVIII., and LXII., of this book, all except the first three and Nos. XLII. and XLIII being from life. Vasari specially mentions that they were all good portraits, "and very like the sitters." And as he knew all the persons concerned his testimony on that point is valuable.

The years 1551 to 1553 were a troubled time for Charles V., who was harassed with defensive and unsuccessful war against the Turks in Hungary, against France in both Savoy and Lorraine, and against the rising in Germany headed by Maurice of Savoy. And that these troubles were not increased by the war spreading also to Italy was due entirely to the strong position to which Cosimo had by this time brought Tuscany, and to his steady adherence to the cause of the Emperor. Nevertheless in 1552 the peace of Italy was severely endangered by the action of the republic of Siena, which again rose in revolt against Charles V., drove out the Spanish garrison, and accepted a French garrison in its place. Cosimo was, however, able to prevent the revolt from spreading to other states, and in January 1553 a force was despatched from Naples to subdue Siena; but owing to the death of the Viceroy of Naples, Don Pedro di Toledo,[1] Eleonora's father, this force failed to effect anything. For his efforts in the Emperor's cause the latter conferred upon Cosimo the coveted honour of the Order of the Golden Fleece.[2]

The attempt from Naples having failed, Cosimo now proceeded to undertake the conquest of Siena himself, nominally of course on behalf of the Emperor, Siena being an Imperial fief. He had by this time a large and well-equipped army, partly composed of German, Swiss, and other

[1] He died in Florence, and is buried in the cathedral. His portrait is in the Uffizi Gallery.

[2] A medal was struck on the occasion by Cosimo, which shows him wearing the Order of the Golden Fleece; it is to be seen in the Florentine collection of coins and medals in the Bargello Museum, Florence.

non-Italian troops, and partly of the Tuscan militia inaugurated many years before by Machiavelli, which Cosimo had revived and largely increased; while the numerous fortresses of Tuscany were well armed, strongly garrisoned, and commanded by reliable leaders not belonging to Tuscany. The army which he sent against Siena was commanded by Giacomo Medichino, Marquis of Marignano; while that of Siena, consisting chiefly of French troops, was commanded by the skilful soldier Piero Strozzi, Filippo Strozzi's gallant son, who in his unceasing endeavours to avenge his father's death was always to be found opposing Cosimo wherever any fighting was taking place. The war was a long one, Siena making a splendid fight in defence of her ancient republic. Piero Strozzi added greatly to his laurels by his conduct of the campaign; it was carried on throughout the Sienese territory, the whole country between Siena and Florence becoming a frequently fought-over battlefield. Cosimo introduced great barbarity into the conflict by his cruel treatment of the country people of the districts traversed by the war, which increased the determined resistance offered to him. At length, in August 1554 Strozzi's army sustained a severe defeat at Marciano,[1] which was followed by the investment of the city of Siena, which endured a terrible siege for many months. Everything that a brave people could do in such a case was done, even the ladies of Siena taking an active part in the defence. When,

[1] To commemorate this victory Cosimo afterwards erected a column in the Piazza San Felice, Florence; but it was removed in the time of the Austrian Grand Dukes. A tablet on one of the adjacent houses records its having stood there.

after untold horrors had been suffered, the end drew near, it was decided that Piero Strozzi with a portion of the troops should depart to hold Montalcino (one of Siena's subject cities which was yet unconquered), and the command of the defence then devolved on Blaise de Montluc, Marshal of France, who covered himself with no less glory than Strozzi had done. At length, when out of 40,000 inhabitants only 6,000 remained alive, and when everything edible had been consumed, Siena surrendered (April 1555). The concluding scene is thus described by Trollope:—

"The miserable remnant of the brave garrison marched out with the honours of war, accompanied by six hundred families who would not stay to see their beloved city under a tyrant's rule. They marched out into a desolate country; for two years no spade had touched the soil; from Montalcino to Siena, from Siena to Florence, no living thing moved upon the face of the land. Many died that day, though Montluc killed his horse to give them food. At Buonconvento Strozzi met them; at length they reached Montalcino, and there the remnants of Sienese liberty found a haven. The shadow of an ancient republic rested for a while on its old grey walls as faintly as their hopes, but it soon passed over the mouldering dial and disappeared for ever."[1]

Thus ended the last of the great Italian republics of the Middle Ages. It had long been in the power either of France or Spain. Cosimo, when once he had conquered Siena, did not treat it badly. He

[1] Montalcino also surrendered four years later, and was incorporated with Cosimo's dominions.

retained almost intact its ancient constitution, and preserved the local customs and traditions of its government; so that there was less change than had been the case even in Florence itself; and to this conduct on his part is due the strong local colour which Siena has ever since retained. On that state coming under his rule,[1] Cosimo appointed as Siena's first governor his own personal friend Niccolini, and built on the spur called the Lizza the strong fort of Sta. Barbara, which is still in use. As soon as the war was over Cosimo paid a long visit to Siena, and arranged all these matters himself; and so much to the satisfaction of the Sienese were the various details settled that Siena never afterwards revolted from the Medici, and became the most loyal portion of their dominions; while in after years that city came to consider it as a right that one member of the Medici family should always be its governor.[2] And out of Cosimo's army of 30,000 men, 7,000 of his best troops were recruited from Siena.

In October 1555 the Emperor Charles V., who had been the most prominent figure in European history for forty years, abdicated at an impressive ceremony held at Brussels, resigning Spain, Naples, the Netherlands, and his other hereditary dominions to his son Philip II., and the imperial dignity to his brother Ferdinand, King of Hungary and Bohemia.[3] He retired to the monastery of Yuste in Spain, and died there in 1558 at the age of

[1] On its being subdued Charles V. granted to his son Philip II. the investiture of the fief of Siena; and theoretically Cosimo held Siena by sub-investiture from Philip II.

[2] Chap. xxvii. p. 387, chap. xxviii. p. 433, and chap. xxix. p. 480.

[3] For general list of Emperors from 1400 to 1737, *see* Appendix XI

fifty-eight. In the same year that Charles V. abdicated, Pope Julius III. died, and was succeeded first by Marcellus II., and after a month by Paul IV.

While Cosimo I., by his conquest of Siena and the other acquisitions of territory which he had gradually gained, as well as by the efficient administration of his military affairs, had doubled the territory of Tuscany and more than doubled her offensive and defensive power, the improvements he wrought in her civil administration were still more important. Cosimo ruled by fear; his government was a tyrannical one, and none dared disobey or evade his commands; but he ruled well. In every department of the State order and the strictest discipline took the place of disorder and corruption. The administration of justice was entirely remodelled; a proper criminal code was drawn up, and rigidly adhered to; magistrates were well paid and forbidden to receive any sort of bribe, and terrible retribution fell upon any who transgressed. The police had to submit daily to Cosimo a list of all crimes committed during the previous twenty-four hours; and they had reason to rue it if any attempt to shoot or stab was not promptly followed by the arrest of the criminal. Cosimo's secret prisons, more dreaded than even those of Venice, were kept for those who failed to obey these orders. For the rest justice had never been so evenly administered; never in the days of freedom had justice been obtainable as it now was under the rule of a tyrant. Heavy taxes had to be imposed, especially after the great expense of the Sienese war, but Cosimo by his

care over the commerce of the country enabled the people to bear them.

"He revived the decaying silk and woollen trades. . . . By disobeying Charles V.'s order to the Italian cities to eschew the fairs of Lyons, Cosimo drew trade away from Genoa and Lucca, while he also captured the lucrative trade in brocades with Sicily and Spain. . . . He set an example in scientific farming and fruit-growing. He took a lively interest in the silver mines of Pietra Santa, the marble quarries near Carrarra, and the anthracite discoveries on the upper Arno; concessions were obtained for working the alum of Piombino, and the iron of Elba."[1]

Roads, drainage works, harbours, markets,[2] all the appliances of a modern state, grew up in all directions under Cosimo's hand. Pisa, then a depopulated desert, was revived again into a flourishing city; its sanitation was improved by the draining of the surrounding marshes, and its prosperity increased by the introduction of new manufactures; the harbour was reopened by the construction of new docks; the University was re-established, and Tuscans forbidden to take degrees elsewhere; the Pisa School of Botany was founded, and became afterwards very celebrated; while by frequently residing at Pisa with his family, Cosimo made it a fashionable resort. Leghorn was raised from a neglected fishing village of 700 inhabitants to a busy port, and plans were laid for its development which afterwards bore much fruit under Cosimo's

[1] *The Cambridge Modern History,* vol. iii. chap. xii.

[2] Cosimo built the Mercato Nuovo, which was the principal mart for silk. The fine bronze boar in front of it was executed by Tacca, being a copy of the ancient one in marble in the Uffizi Gallery.

son Ferdinand. Siena had its social and commercial conditions in every way improved, while the Sienese Maremma was drained, and agricultural colonies from Lombardy established there. By these and similar methods carried out all over Tuscany, Cosimo advanced the material prosperity of the country no less than he did its political power.

Naval and military affairs showed the same energetic rule. Portoferrajo was made a strong naval station, and in addition to his extensive works on its harbour Cosimo introduced a seafaring population from Sicily and Greece, while he also began the creation of a fleet of galleys which under his son Ferdinand did good service against the Turks and the pirates of the Mediterranean. His army, thirty thousand strong, was well equipped; while of his militia Cosimo was specially proud, and declared that he could mobilise them in five days. He studded Tuscany with fortresses, fortresses which, constructed with the assistance of his celebrated architect and engineer Ammanati, were monuments of defensive strength. As an example of one of these we have the remarkable fortress of San Martino, on the hill above San Piero a Sieve, laid out under Cosimo's orders in order to defend Florence on the north, which, when its garrison and armament were withdrawn two centuries later by the Austrian Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo (1765-1790) was ordered by him not to be destroyed, but to be kept "as a monument of the military architecture of the sixteenth century." This fort is a mile in circumference, and the strength of its construction extraordinary. It stands on the spur of a hill at the foot of which

on three sides flow the waters of the Sieve, and its lofty keep dominates the whole plain of the Mugello. In the centre of the fort is a capacious reservoir for storing water for the garrison; while, should this be exhausted, a deep staircase in the heart of the mountain enabled the troops to lead their horses, without being seen by the enemy, down to the Sieve for water. In the depths of the mountain are vast subterranean halls where were magazines, armouries, foundries for making every kind of military equipment, and store-rooms for food, so that the fortress was considered able to defy the most formidable enemy. The bastions and walls are of extraordinary thickness and solidity; and they, with the battlements and casemated gateways, are studded everywhere with the Medici arms. Within the walls there is much open space for the movements of troops, which is now cultivated. This fortress was begun by Cosimo I. and completed by his son Ferdinand I., with the assistance of the architect Buontalenti.[1]

Nor did fleets, troops, and fortresses, the development of trade, and the improvement of civil administration absorb all Cosimo's energies. The Medici have written their sign-manual even upon the landscape of Tuscany. Few among the many who look with pleasure on the gentle slopes of the Tuscan hills, covered far and wide with those olive plantations whose soft bluish-green

[1] In this fortress was found by the Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo the huge brass cannon, weighing 27,000 lbs., the work of Michelangelo, and called "Saint Paul" because the brazen head of the apostle formed the cascabel. It had been left there by the Medici as a curious object of art. Pietro Leopoldo was declared by his detractors to have destroyed it for the sake of the brass, an accusation which even Napier repeats (vol. vi. p. 198); nevertheless it is now in the Bargello Museum.

tints add so much to the special beauty of the landscape in Tuscany, realise that this great industry[1] which now forms so large a part of that country's agricultural life is due to Cosimo I., who introduced it as a portion of his measures for improving the agricultural prosperity of the country. Such things last when crowns, castles, and Orders of the Golden Fleece have long passed away.

By these various measures Cosimo gradually welded Tuscany into a well-administered modern state and the leading power in Italy; and they would have made his rule entirely admirable had they not been combined with vindictive conduct towards all who opposed him, and a tyranny which crushed out all independent spirit. It is observable that he was to some extent conscious of his own limitations; tyrant as he was, he would at times endeavour to adopt outwardly something of the *bonhomie* and absence of formality which was customary with his great ancestor, Lorenzo the Magnificent; but the *rôle* was one alien to his character, and let any presume to treat him in return with the freedom with which they would have treated Lorenzo, and they at once found Cosimo lapse into the cold and stiff demeanour natural to one who ruled by fear alone and had no sympathy with republican ways.

**The Florentine Tapestry Manufactory.**

Among Cosimo's numerous successful efforts to promote the manufactures of the country none was more important in its results than his introduction of the Tapestry manufacture (*Arazzo*),

[1] The olive has been called the "tree of civilisation," since it requires tending for about eighteen years before it yields any return.

an industry which had hitherto been confined to Flanders. Being anxious to establish a manufactory for this industry which should surpass all others, he founded the Florentine Tapestry Manufactory, and by means of an abnormally high salary induced two Flemings, Nicholas Karcher and Jean Van der Roost, to enter his service for the charge of it, giving them an annual salary of six hundred gold *scudi*, free quarters, and permission to undertake private commissions in addition to their work of charge of the factory. In return they bound themselves to teach the secrets of their art to a fixed number of Florentines and to keep twenty-four tapestries always on hand as examples. All work done for the house of Medici was paid for separately.[1] The results of this action surpassed even Cosimo's expectations. The Florentine Tapestry Manufactory grew in a short time into great repute, its work being considered fully equal to that of Flanders, and even surpassing the latter in variety of design and harmony of colour. This manufactory had a distinguished career for nearly two hundred years, but came to an end when the Medici passed away, the manufactory being closed in 1737 on the death of the last Medici Grand Duke. We are told, "It prospered and fell with the house of Medici." Of the tapestries made by this factory one hundred and twenty-four had been purchased by the Medici family, and these formed part of the gift to the nation made by Anna Maria

[1] One of these tapestries is to be seen in the Municipal Council hall in the Palazzo Vecchio bearing Van der Roost's signature, a piece of meat roasting on a spit.

Ludovica.[1] They were at that time scattered among the various palaces and villas of the family, but they are now to be seen collected together and forming (with specimens of Flemish and Gobelins tapestry which also belonged to the Medici) the Galleria degli Arrazi.[2] And a comparison between them and the Flemish and Gobelins tapestries is decidedly to the advantage of the Florentine tapestries. They are exceedingly rich, woven in gold and silver thread intermixed with silk and wool, the borders especially being very artistically designed.

**Chariot races.**

Cosimo for the amusement of the people introduced chariot races, after the pattern of those of ancient Rome. They were held in the Piazza Santa Maria Novella, where the marble goals are still to be seen. These were originally of wood, but Ferdinand I. caused them to be constructed of marble and placed (as now) on bronze tortoises made by Gian da Bologna.

**Maria.**

In 1557, four years after they moved into the new palace, occurred the first death in Cosimo's family, that of his eldest daughter Maria, who died at sixteen, and whose charming portrait at about the age of ten, by Bronzino, in the Uffizi Gallery, is well known.[3] In the following century it was declared that this death of his eldest daughter was due to slow

[1] *See* chap. xxxi. p. 503 (*j*).

[2] The collection includes the three large Flemish tapestries representing the festivities at Marseilles at the marriage of Catherine de' Medici, which were sent by her as a present to Cosimo at the time of his own marriage in 1539.

[3] Plate LV.

poison given her by her father, the motive being asserted to be that, having arranged with Pope Paul IV. for her marriage to that Pope's nephew, Tabriano, Cosimo discovered that she had fallen in love with another youth, a page at her father's court. No historians of the present day give any credit to this story, which made its first appearance more than fifty years after Maria's death. Moreover the State archives now show that Cosimo, who was at this time strenuously endeavouring to establish close political relations with Ercole II., Duke of Ferrara, had arranged for Maria's marriage, not as the story relates to the Pope's nephew, but to Duke Ercole's eldest son, Alfonso d'Este. So that Cosimo would by the crime alleged have destroyed an alliance he was labouring in every way to cement, and have made an enemy of the Duke of Ferrara, whom he was particularly anxious to unite to himself as closely as possible.

In 1558 great destruction was caused in Florence by an unusually heavy flood in the Arno, which swept away the Ponte Sta. Trinità, the Ponte alla Carraja, and all the houses which were on the Ponte a Rubaconte,[1] the Ponte Vecchio (built by Taddeo Gaddi in 1334) alone of all the bridges remaining uninjured. Florence became in a few hours a sea of mud and ruin, some parts of the city being submerged to a depth of twenty-two feet. It was after this flood that Cosimo built his two fine bridges[2] to replace the two which had been destroyed, the new Ponte Sta. Trinità being

[1] Now Ponte alle Grazie.

[2] These two bridges, the Ponte Sta. Trinità and the Ponte alla Carraja, are visible in Plate LIX. (lower down the river than the Ponte Vecchio), the Ponte Sta. Trinità being the nearer of the two.

MARIA DE' MEDICI, DAUGHTER OF COSIMO I.
By Bronzino.

*linari*] [*Uffizi Gallery*

especially notable. This beautiful bridge, in its proportions, excellence of construction, and the symmetry of its lines, exemplifies the perfection in such architecture then attained in Tuscany, though now unattainable anywhere.[1] Part of the reason why it pleases the eye so much is that its curve is that technically known as a "catenary," being that taken by a chain suspended from supports at both ends, a curve which is neither that of an ellipse or of any other geometrical figure, but special to that particular case.

In June 1558 Piero Strozzi, the eldest of Filippo Strozzi's three sons, was killed at the taking of Thionville. He had spent a large part of his life in warring against Cosimo and endeavouring to exact vengeance for his father's death, and had become one of the most experienced generals of the time. He had spent many years in France, where he was highly thought of by Catherine de' Medici, and was protected by her against the attempts which Cosimo made on his life. Cosimo constantly tried to have him assassinated,[2] but Strozzi never retaliated in the same way; and at his death Cosimo spoke of him with honour, affirming that Strozzi had ever acted against him "*con la visiera aperta*," and that "Italy had lost in him one of her principal gentlemen": no small tribute from so vindictive an enemy as Cosimo. In the same year the latter gave his daughter Isabella,

[1] The architect was Ammanati.

[2] This is rendered perfectly certain by Cosimo's letter to Oradini, in which in full detail he orders Oradini to arrange for the assassination of Piero Strozzi, saying that he is to engage two or more assassins for the purpose, and that he (Cosimo) will bear all the expenses.

then sixteen, in marriage to Paolo Giordano Orsini, Prince of Bracciano, and his daughter Lucrezia, then fifteen, to Alfonso, the eldest son of Ercole II., Duke of Ferrara,[1] instead of her sister Maria, whose untimely death had prevented a similar alliance. In November of this year Mary Tudor died, and her sister Elizabeth succeeded her as Queen of England.

The year 1559 was an important one for Europe. In February (four months before Henry II.'s sudden death at the tournament in Paris[2]) the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis between Henry II., Philip II., and Queen Elizabeth put an end to the war in which France, Spain, and England had been engaged, and closed the long struggle between the two former for supremacy in Italy, which, begun by the invasion of Charles VIII., had lasted for over sixty years. That struggle ended in a complete victory for Spain; and the final result was mainly, if not entirely, due to the fact that Tuscany, the most powerful state in Italy, had sided against France and with Spain. By the above treaty France formally withdrew from Italy, surrendering all her claims in that country; Siena, together with Montalcino, was assured to Cosimo; the Duchy of Savoy, conquered by France twenty-three years before, was restored to its rightful Duke, Emmanuel Philibert, and erected into an independent buffer state between Italy and France; Spain remained in possession of both north and south Italy, while Cosimo held the centre; and

[1] Alfonso himself became Duke of Ferrara in the following year on the death of his father.

[2] Chap. xix. p. 53.

the peace thus created in Italy lasted for over half a century. In June Philip II. married Elizabeth of France,[1] daughter of Henry II., who, being killed a few days later, was succeeded by his son, Francis II. In July Philip II. quitted the Netherlands, which country during the remaining thirty-nine years of his life he never again visited. Before leaving he appointed as Governor of the Netherlands his half-sister, Margaret of Parma, and held at Ghent the last chapter of the Order of the Golden Fleece that was ever assembled. In August Pope Paul IV., who during his four years' pontificate had been a constant cause of war in Italy, died, and was succeeded by Pius IV.

The new Pope was of humble origin, and though named Giovanni Angelo Medici (or Medichino), was no connection of the Medici of Florence.[2] Nevertheless, on becoming Pope he assumed the arms of the latter,[3] and Cosimo made no objection, hoping to obtain solid advantages through this Pope's friendship. For Cosimo was

[1] The four marriages of Philip II. were :—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (i) Maria of Portugal. | Married | 1543. |
| (ii) Mary of England. | ,, | 1554. |
| (iii) Elizabeth of France. | ,, | 1559. |
| (iv) Anna of Austria. | ,, | 1570. |

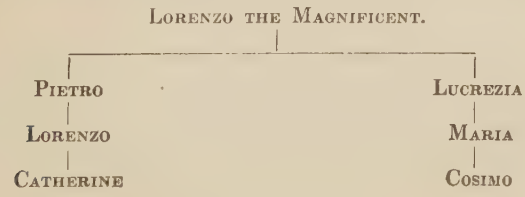
[2] His father was a petty shopkeeper in Milan.

[3] The family of Pius IV. could not, and never did, claim any relationship with the Medici of Florence until his elevation to the Papacy. Giacomo Medichino, the brother of Giovanni Angelo, was a corsair, and was made by force Marquis of Marignano; he then took service under Spain, and became general of the league of the Emperor Charles V. and Clement VII. In the war with Siena Cosimo employed Giacomo to command his army, and his brother Giovanni Angelo shortly afterwards becoming Pope, the two brothers claimed a relationship to Cosimo, which, though entirely without any foundation, it suited the latter at the time not to contest; and the genealogist thereupon inserted a new branch into the family tree of that portion of the Medici who were descended from Giambuono, son of Chiarissimo (*see* Appendix II.), bearing the names of Giovanni Angelo and his brother Giacomo. Symonds, in his *Sketches in Italy*, gives an amusing account of the transaction.

now silently at work upon a project which he had for some time been secretly nourishing. We are told that the leading marks of Cosimo's character were "profound sagacity, deep dissimulation, impenetrable darkness, extreme caution, patience, resolution, and indomitable perseverance." And the project for which Cosimo was now, in accordance with these characteristics, secretly working was nothing less than the realisation of that which had been the culminating point of the dream of Clement VII. As a Duke he was theoretically merely the Emperor's lieutenant; as a Grand Duke he would be a reigning monarch. Cosimo could not hope to obtain that crown upon which his aim was set through the regular channel, the Emperor; Ferdinand I. (like his dead brother, Charles V.) would not be likely to entertain for a moment a proposal to place a crown on the head of one who only a few years ago had been an unknown youth to whom it had been a great favour to allow him to become ruler of Florence and the Emperor's vassal. But future Emperors, further removed from the days of 1537, might not be so opposed; and in the meantime it might be possible to obtain the coveted dignity through another channel, that of the Pope. For this object paramount influence at Rome was all important; and to attain this Cosimo was steadily employing every means at his disposal, though allowing none to know what was his ultimate aim in doing so. Pius IV. was soon entirely under his domination, and when in 1560 Cosimo paid a visit to Rome, and was entertained by this Pope, his influence was so powerful that the Pope, sensible that Cosimo was now by

far the most important ruler in Italy, wished, we are told, to make him a king, or what was practically the same thing, a reigning Grand Duke. But Cosimo put the suggestion aside as a mere polite piece of flattery, outside practical politics. It was what he was quietly working for, but his excessive caution made him feel that the time for such a step was not now, when the nations of Europe had just made peace together, or while Ferdinand I. was Emperor. When France and Spain should be again at enmity, when England should be involved in war with one or other of them, and when a weaker Emperor should have succeeded Ferdinand I., and one perhaps allied to his family in marriage, then such a step might be hazarded without danger of provoking opposition other than that of mere verbal protests. Moreover, his relative Catherine[1] (who hated Cosimo, and thwarted him on many occasions) began in this year 1560 her long career of power in France, and Cosimo, foreseeing that she would soon be involved in difficulties with both Spain and England, if not also with Germany, when she would be unable to offer any active opposition to his design, preferred to wait until this should be the case. In the meantime he succeeded so well

[1] Catherine and Cosimo had each a common great-grandfather in Lorenzo the Magnificent, thus :—



in the preliminary step of establishing a paramount influence at Rome that three successive Popes were practically governed by him.

Meanwhile, Cosimo adopted measures to establish still more firmly the position of his family, already much strengthened by the marriages of his daughters, one of whom was now Duchess of Ferrara, and the other Princess of Bracciano, the wife of the most powerful prince in Rome. In 1560, through his influence with Pius IV., Cosimo succeeded in getting his second son[1] Giovanni,[2] now seventeen, made a cardinal: thus imitating the course which Lorenzo the Magnificent had so successfully taken with that other Giovanni who had become Pope Leo X. Cosimo hoped that Giovanni, who was his favourite son, would achieve similar success, while his joining the ranks of the cardinals would help to strengthen that influence at Rome which Cosimo had special reasons for desiring. He also in 1561 instituted the Tuscan Order of Knighthood, the Order of Santo Stefano, which afterwards became very famous in Tuscany, and highly sought after. It was a naval Order, and its primary objects were laid down as being (i) to rid the Mediterranean of pirates; (ii) to liberate the Christians held captive

[1] The dates of birth of Cosimo's and Eleonora's eight children were:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maria | born 1540 | Lucrezia | born 1544 |
| Francis | ,, 1541 | Garzia | ,, 1547 |
| Isabella | ,, 1542 | Ferdinand | ,, 1549 |
| Giovanni | ,, 1543 | Pietro | ,, 1554 |

[2] Plate LVI. This portrait of Giovanni in his cardinal's dress (one of those which has always been kept at the villa of Poggio a Caiano) shows him as he was at the time of his death two years later at the age of nineteen. Sustermans copied it from an earlier one now lost.

by the pirates and the Turks, and (iii) to propagate the Christian faith. The Duke himself was the Grand Master, and, by the Order being confined to the nobility and made the chief Order of Tuscany, the knights became a sort of permanent body-guard for the protection of the Duke and his dynasty. Being a naval Order the knights of Santo Stefano had their conventual palace and church at Pisa, and the church is hung with Moorish banners taken by them from the Turks and the Barbary pirates, and with the figure-heads of Turkish galleys captured in war. The knights won special honour at the battle of Lepanto (1571). The cross of the Order was similar in shape to that of the knights of Malta, but in colour red instead of white.[1] In this same year 1561 Cosimo and Eleonora, who had already lost one of their three daughters, heard of the death at Ferrara of their daughter Lucrezia, Duchess of Ferrara, at the age of seventeen. It was in after years declared that she was poisoned by her husband, on the ground of infidelity; but the statement is considered by the highest authority[2] to be quite untrue, and to have been entirely fabricated by the Florentine *fuorusciti.*

**Death of Giovanni, Garzia, and Eleonora di Toledo.**

And now there fell upon Cosimo a terrible domestic disaster. In October 1562 he started on a tour through Grosseto, the Maremma, and Leghorn to Pisa, to see in person various military and engineering works which he had

[1] The Order came to an end in 1859.
[2] *The Cambridge Modern History,* vol. iii. chap. xii.

inaugurated at those places. He took with him his wife Eleonora (who had been suffering from hemorrhage of the lungs for more than a year, and was recommended by the doctors to go for the winter to the milder climate near the sea-coast), and his three sons, Giovanni, Garzia, and Ferdinand. A bad epidemic of malarial fever was in that year devastating a large part of Tuscany, and especially the Maremma, and the doctors urged Cosimo not to take with him his young sons; but the latter were eager for the chances of sport on such a trip, and persuaded their father to disregard the advice. The expedition had a sad ending; for within a single month Eleonora, Giovanni, and Garzia all died from malarial fever, Giovanni on their reaching Leghorn, and Garzia and his mother three weeks later at Pisa.

Such an event could not in Cosimo's case fail to form a foundation for a tragic tale of murder. And accordingly we find put forward a highly dramatic one, purporting to convey the true story of these three deaths, and stating that in a quarrel while the two brothers were out shooting near Leghorn Garzia had stabbed his brother Giovanni, who died three days later in consequence; that Cosimo was so enraged at this death of his favourite son that he drew his sword and killed Garzia with his own hands; and that Eleonora died of grief and horror at the double crime.

This account (which has continued to the present day) was that related by the various historians of that age. The latter, unable to obtain access to the private documents of the Medici family, were forced to rely upon infor-

GIOVANNI, SECOND SON OF COSIMO I.

By Sustermans.

*Brogi* [*Villa of Poggio a Caiano.*

GARZIA, THIRD SON OF COSIMO I.

By Bronzino.

*(Reproduced by permission of the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.)*

*Ashmolean Museum*

mation often felt by them to be dubious; and several of them, though giving this account, throw doubts upon its truth.[1] The chief cause of their uncertainty was that however deeply the subject was probed, in no case could it be discovered with whom the report originated; added to which every investigation showed that it had no origin in Tuscany, but that all the different versions of the story had this in common, that they all emanated from Rome, the principal abode of the Florentine exiles. From thence, spread by letters and news-agents to Venice, to France, and above all to the large body of ecclesiastics assembled at the Council of Trent, the story soon became the common opinion outside Tuscany, and was eagerly taken up by every foreign enemy of Cosimo throughout Europe.

But this account of these deaths did not all appear at the same time. Its Roman authors, whoever they were, brought it out piecemeal. When on the 20th November Giovanni died it was stated that he had been killed by his brother Garzia. When three weeks later Garzia died an addition was made to the effect that Giovanni when wounded had in retaliation also wounded Garzia, and that this was the cause of the latter's death. At this point the story remained for some fifty years.

To this first portion of the story there was,

[1] Thus Giustiniano, a Venetian, says it is so reported in the Roman newspapers; and Muratori, after relating the story, says: "If this be the truth or a lie I do not know." Galluzi (writing about two centuries after the event) says that he considers it would have been almost impossible for Cosimo to have treated the widespread report with the indifference that he did if it had been true. Lastly Botta, a strong anti-Medicean, severe in condemning the faults of that family, but a man very anxious to be just and upright, states that he considers it was simply an invention of Cosimo's enemies.

however, added, more than fifty years later, a further embellishment of it to the effect that Garzia's death had not been caused as previously stated, but that Cosimo, enraged at Giovanni's death, had killed his younger son with his own hands; and that Eleonora's death had been caused by horror thereat. During the intervening fifty years no single letter, document, or historical writing throughout Italy had ever conveyed even a hint of this deed. This addition by making the story so dramatic increased its chance of spreading; while since it was produced long after Cosimo was dead it was evidently aimed, not so much at himself, as at his family.[1] It rapidly spread, and soon became the common belief.

The State archives in these days supply the information which the historians of a former day lacked. And recent research therein[2] has furnished a mass of evidence which conclusively disposes of both portions of the story, and shows that the historians who doubted its truth were right. This evidence includes two letters from Cosimo to his eldest son Francis (then in Spain) relating the events which had occurred to the family during the latter part of this untoward trip. In the first of these, dated 20th November 1562, he tells his son that on the 15th Giovanni had been attacked by malignant fever at Rosignano, that they had promptly moved from thence to Leghorn, but that he became worse, and had died there on the

[1] *See* chap. xxvi. pp. 369-370.

[2] More particularly the painstaking labours of the late Signor Seltini, the results of which were published in his *Tragidie Medicee* (1898), in which book the documents in the State archives which refute the story are quoted in full.

date of the letter; that Garzia and Ferdinand also had fever, but less severely, and that he was going to take them next day to Pisa, where it was hoped they would recover; and that this exceptionally malignant type of fever was very bad all over the part of the country that they had been traversing. This is followed by a second letter from Cosimo to his eldest son, dated 18th December, written amidst all the grief at the death that day of his wife Eleonora, in which he tells Francis that Garzia's fever had increased after their arrival at Pisa, that after a severe illness of twenty-one days he had died on the 12th December, and that his mother, worn out by her exertions in nursing him while she was herself also ill, had succumbed six days later, and giving full details of their last hours.

These letters, together with the other documents in the State archives already referred to, prove with great completeness that the story which so long obtained credence as the history of this episode is a complete fable; one perhaps scarcely expected to be taken seriously even by its unknown authors. It was in fact one of a series which had their origin in the manner by which Cosimo gained his throne. From the day of Montemurlo a ceaseless war was waged between Cosimo and that large number of Florentine families who had lost near relatives in his ruthless executions after that battle, and lived in exile; a war in which Cosimo, cruel and vindictive, slew his enemies with the sword whenever his arm could reach them, and in which the exiles, no less vindictive, but poverty-stricken and with-

out the resources he possessed, responded by attempts to murder him and by a constant stream of stories of this nature poured forth unremittingly on the principle that if enough mud is thrown some must stick.

*The Cambridge Modern History* (than which there is no higher authority) dismisses the entire story in contempt with the following remark:—

"In the autumn of 1562 he (Cosimo) had lost within a few days from Maremma fevers his wife and his two sons, Garzia and Giovanni. A year earlier his well-loved daughter, Lucrezia, died shortly after her marriage to Alfonso II. of Ferrara. These natural misfortunes were in the following century caught up by scandalmongers and Florentine exiles, and distorted into dramatic tragedies of adultery and poison, fratricide, and parricide which have passed muster as the inner history of the reign."[1]

But even without any such terrible additions to its natural features this episode was sufficiently tragic. Of the family party of five who had started for a pleasant trip together only two, Cosimo and his young son Ferdinand, returned. Cosimo had lost within a month the devoted wife who had been his constant companion and adviser for twenty-three years, and two sons, on one of whom, through his recent creation as a cardinal, he had built many hopes, while both of them possessed many attractive qualities. All the three bodies were brought back to Florence and buried in San Lorenzo, the funeral of Giovanni being scarcely over before the grave was again

[1] *The Cambridge Modern History*, vol. iii. chap. xii.

opened to receive the bodies of his mother and brother. And in one corner of the crypt of the family mausoleum these four lie buried together—Cosimo, Eleonora, Giovanni, and Garzia, the last three with the following dates of death upon their tombstones: Giovanni 20th November 1562, Garzia 12th December 1562, and Eleonora 18th December 1562.

Bronzino's fine portrait of poor Garzia[1] who is given a charming character by those who knew him, and who, dying at sixteen, has had his name thus defamed for centuries to gratify political animosity against his father, must have been painted only a few months before the family left Florence on the tour which was to end so disastrously. Of her five sons he was his mother's favourite son. "She loved him as her own eyes," says an old chronicler.

This loss was a severe blow to Cosimo; and under it he became more than ever dark, sullen, and impenetrable. It left him with only four children, Francis, now twenty-two, Isabella, twenty-one, Ferdinand, fourteen, and Pietro, a child of eight. Isabella returning soon afterwards from Rome, took charge of her father's household, her husband Orsini being content that she should live in Florence while he remained at Rome.

Eleonora di Toledo.

Eleonora di Toledo, the only Spanish wife whom the Medici ever took (their other matrimonial alliances being all with France or Austria), deserves a much more prominent place in the history of that family than

[1] Plate LVII.

she has received. The very large part which she had in the establishment of Cosimo's power in the years 1539-1549 has failed altogether to be recognised. Yet Eleonora di Toledo might almost be looked upon as a second founder of the family, so great was the assistance which she brought to Cosimo when as a youth of twenty he was destitute of wealth, family, friends, or influence to support the tottering throne which he had seized, but which without her he would probably in a very short time have lost, together with his own life. Many have wondered how it was that at the beginning of his career Cosimo, so signally without the means to effect such a result, should have been able so quickly and firmly to establish his power; the secret lies in Eleonora di Toledo. Cosimo in time himself became rich by a sound fiscal policy, and by the private trading which he throughout his life carried on; but these sources of income took time to develop, and his urgent want at the commencement was money with which to start such operations, and to maintain a military force for his own protection; Eleonora brought him the immediately available wealth of which he stood so much in need. Cosimo was also without friends or influence to back him; Eleonora brought him the powerful support of her father whose only child she was, and who as ruler over the whole of southern Italy was always able to put pressure upon the Pope to prevent the latter from molesting Cosimo, as he was very desirous of doing. Above all Eleonora had exactly the kind of character which made her an admirable wife to a man of Cosimo's peculiar disposition. She under-

stood how to treat his dark and gloomy moods, and to soothe his fierce rage; she was strongly devoted to him, and never lost her great influence with him during all the twenty-three years of their married life; she was the only channel to his favour; and she was throughout her life a most sensible adviser to him. Though accustomed until she arrived in Florence to the far greater grandeur of her father's vice-regal palace at Naples, she never complained at being given as a residence the gloomy Palazzo Vecchio, until after ten years Cosimo's circumstances enabled him to provide her with a more suitable abode. Lastly, the extent and beneficial nature of her influence is amply demonstrated by the marked deterioration to be observed in Cosimo's character from the time that death deprived him of her when she was forty years of age.

Eleonora's splendid portrait by Bronzino in the Uffizi Gallery,[1] with her little son Ferdinand by her side, is the finest of all Bronzino's many portraits. Whatever may be the reason, her face has an expression of sadness; and the picture has for its background the night scene of a dreary, marshy landscape with dark, desolate hills in the distance, which accords with this expression. The picture was evidently painted some time in the year 1553, when she was thirty-one, and Ferdinand, then her youngest born, was four years old. She wears a magnificent dress of white satin,[2] heavily

[1] Plate LVIII.

[2] Although a close inspection will show that it is white, the shading of the dress makes it look at the first glance almost grey in colour; which again, like the landscape, accords with the generally subdued tone of the picture.

embroidered all over with rich black "galloon" trimming of a very marked pattern, on her head a net of gold cord set with pearls, round her neck a string of large pearls, and round her waist a girdle having a large tassel of pearls. This dress had an important subsequent history. Eleonora was the first who was buried in the manner ever afterwards customary in this family, all the members of which from this time onwards were buried dressed in their most splendid costumes, and wearing numerous jewels. And Eleonora was buried dressed as she appears in this portrait. In 1857 a commission was appointed by the State to open and examine all the Medici coffins, which, owing to their having been kept without due security after the Medici passed away, had, in the early part of the nineteenth century, been broken into by thieves for the sake of the jewels they contained, and were in considerable disorder.[1] When this examination took place Eleonora's coffin was one of the few found without any name or inscription either outside or inside. But her remains were at once recognised by this dress, which was familiar to all through Bronzino's well-known portrait. The official report on the examination of the coffins states in regard to hers:—

"The body was recognised with certainty by the rich dress of white satin richly embroidered with 'galloon' trimming all over both the bodice and the skirt, exactly as she is depicted in the portrait painted by Bronzino which is in the

[1] *See* chap. xxxii. p. 515.

ELEONORA DI TOLEDO, WIFE OF COSIMO I., AT THIRTY-ONE.
By Bronzino.

*nari]* [*Uffizi Gallery.*

Gallery of the Statues,[1] together with the same net of gold cord worn on the hair. Beneath this dress was an under-gown of crimson velvet; and on the feet shoes similarly of crimson velvet."[2]

The string of pearls round her neck and the girdle with the tassel of pearls had, however, been stolen.

Cosimo, notwithstanding the heavy domestic blow which he had suffered, did not relax his pursuit of the aim on which his mind was set. To this end it was highly important to have one son a cardinal, who would maintain a constant watch over Cosimo's interests at Rome; and within a month of the funeral of his wife and sons he obtained from Pius IV. the creation as cardinal of his fourth son, Ferdinand, to take the place of the dead Giovanni, though Ferdinand was only in his fourteenth year.

In December 1563 the Council of Trent, which had sat for eighteen years, finished its labours and was dissolved. Pope Pius IV. (the Pope who made himself a member of the Medici family) has obtained a lasting memorial in the work of this Council from the fact that it drew up *a new creed,* called by his name, which has ever since had to be accepted in addition to the three creeds of antiquity by all belonging to the Church of Rome. As regards the primary object for which it was convened, the Council of Trent achieved nothing. Abandoning the endeavour to reunite Christendom (to attain which object the convocation

[1] The former name for the Uffizi Gallery; *see* chap. xxvi. p. 354.

[2] *Official Report of the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum.* 1857.

of this Council had been so anxiously striven after for so many years before it was assembled) it made no attempt to deal with the evil which Pope Adrian VI. had so ably diagnosed as the cause of the disease, or to apply that remedy which he had pointed out as the only one, "a limitation of the absolutism of the Head of the Church";[1] an attempt which even the Councils of Pisa, Constance, and Bâle had made. On the contrary, this Council turned its whole attention to re-establishing the Papacy on the footing on which it had stood in the thirteenth century. So that, instead of uniting, it accentuated the differences between the two parties more than ever. Nevertheless the Emperor Ferdinand I. did not even yet give up the hope of effecting a reconciliation. As soon as the Council had dispersed after this abortive conclusion, the Emperor (following to some extent the example which Catherine de' Medici had set two years before in France) caused George Cassander, a highly learned Belgian theologian, to draw up a statement of the points of controversy between the two parties to serve as a basis for a fresh conference on the subject. This Cassander did in a very able and broad-minded treatise, entitled "*A consideration of the articles of religion under dispute between Catholics and Protestants*," which was duly published. But owing to the Emperor's death no further result ensued.

In 1564 the Emperor Ferdinand I. died, and was succeeded by his son, Maximilian II., with

[1] Vol. i. pp. 432-433.

whom Cosimo hoped to be able to establish closer relations. In this he was successful, and in January 1565 Cosimo's eldest son Francis was married to the Emperor Maximilian's sister, the Archduchess Joanna of Austria, daughter of the Emperor Ferdinand I., and niece of the Emperor Charles V. It was another step upwards on the ladder which the Medici had for so many generations been climbing, being the most exalted marriage they had ever yet made; and Cosimo had good reason to hope that it would materially assist him when the time should come for him to put forward a claim to be, no longer merely Duke of Florence, but a crowned head. It did not, however, augur well for the chances of happiness of Francis and Joanna that the former had been for more than a year passionately attached to the beautiful Venetian, Bianca Capello, while the Archduchess was not only plain in appearance and unattractive in manner, but also made no secret that she considered the marriage one altogether derogatory to her dignity.

As Cosimo was anxious to do honour in every way to his son's bride, nothing was omitted which could add splendour to the occasion. It was settled that the Palazzo Vecchio should be made over to Francis and Joanna as their residence, and the old castle of the Signoria of Florence was under Cosimo's orders beautified in every way by Vasari to fit it for the abode of an Archduchess. The suite of apartments which had been occupied by Cosimo and Eleonora was entirely redecorated; round the vestibule of the *cortile* were painted

fresco pictures of Austrian towns, so that Joanna should have familiar scenes to look at;[1] the massive pillars of the *cortile* were adorned with stucco ornaments on a gold ground, which still remain, though the gold has disappeared; and in the centre of the court Cosimo placed Verrocchio's beautiful fountain of the *Boy with the Dolphin*, which had been made for Lorenzo the Magnificent's villa of Careggi; while a pipe conducting specially pure water from the Boboli hill was brought over the Ponte Vecchio to supply the water which flows from this fountain. The Archduchess arrived in Florence in January 1565, and the marriage, which took place in San Lorenzo, was a very magnificent ceremony, and was followed by a week of public festivities of the most lavish description.

The Passaggio.

In addition to these arrangements Cosimo, in connection with this marriage of his son with the Emperor's sister, constructed another work which still remains one of the notable sights of Florence. In imitation of the passage which Homer describes as uniting the palace of Hector with that of Priam (as well as to provide a means of escape for his family in time of disturbance), Cosimo arranged to connect, by a long covered gallery, his own palace with the Palazzo Vecchio, now to be occupied by his son. He therefore ordered Vasari to construct the celebrated *Passaggio*,[2] a corridor of nearly half a mile long through a crowded part of the city, starting from the Palazzo Vecchio,

[1] The remains of these frescoes are still to be seen.
[2] Plate LIX.

THE LONG GALLERY LEADING FROM THE PALAZZO VECCHIO ON THE NORTH BANK OF THE ARNO TO THE PITTI PALACE ON THE SOUTH BANK (THE "PASSAGGIO")

*The two bridges seen lower down the river than the Ponte Vecchio are the Ponte Sta. Trinità and the Ponte alla Carraja. Both the Pitti Palace and the Palazzo Vecchio are beyond the limits of the picture.*

*Alinari*

passing over the building known as the Uffizi, or public offices (which Cosimo had built in 1561), over the top of the shops on the Ponte Vecchio, through houses and over streets, until it reached the Ducal Palace. The work must have been executed with great rapidity, for the contract was only signed on the 12th March 1565, and Lapini tells us that the corridor was finished by November. The contract for this work gives some details interesting to those who know Florence in these days. It lays down that,

"There shall be an arch above the street[1] where is the Dogana to the wall of the church of San Piero Scheraggio;[2] and another arch at the house of Signor Trajano Boba; and along the Lungarno a corridor with arches and pilasters, as far as the Ponte Vecchio, thence proceeding onwards above the shops and houses of the said bridge on the side towards the Ponte a Rubaconte,[3] and round the tower of the house of Matteo Manelli by means of stone brackets. From this tower another arch spanning the Via de' Bardi, shall rest upon the tower of the 'Parte Guelfa,' opposite the house of the Manelli. The corridor is then to follow the small ally behind the houses facing the principal street, and to pass above the portico of the church of Santa Felicità, where is to be made a *loggia*.[4] Thence the corridor, supported on pilasters along the whole length of the cloisters of the clergy of

[1] Now the Via della Ninna.

[2] This church stood at the corner of the present Uffizi building, and was partially demolished when in 1561 Cosimo built this range of public offices. Its very old and interesting pulpit is to be seen in the little church of San Leonardo in Arcetri.

[3] Now Ponte alle Grazie.

[4] This *loggia* opens into the church above its west door, and thus formed a means for the members of the family to be present at Mass in this church.

Santa Felicità, shall gradually descend to the level of the garden of the Pitti.[1] The said corridor and its adjuncts are to be roofed in, the ceilings plastered, whitewashed, and finished according to the orders, designs, and models given from time to time by the magnificent and excellent master Giorgio Vasari."[2]

The sentence in this contract ordering the corridor to be carried round the outside of the Palazzo Manelli on brackets is interesting. That palace occupies the end of the bridge, and had belonged to the Manelli family for many generations. Its position appeared to make it unavoidable that Cosimo's new corridor should pass through it.

"Accordingly," Mellini says, "Cosimo sent for the owners of the said palace, and asked if they were willing courteously to permit him to make the passage through it. But they strongly objected, pointing out that it would spoil their house; whereupon he (Cosimo) placed it as we now see it on stone brackets, passing by a sharp turn round the outside of the house. Nor did he bear them ill-will, saying that every one was master of his own house."

Hitherto the shops on the Ponte Vecchio had been occupied by butchers; on making the *Passaggio* Cosimo ordered them to vacate, and directed all the jewellers in Florence to inhabit these shops; and this has ever since been the jewellers' quarter.

From the time of his eldest son's marriage

[1] The subsequent extension of the Ducal Palace made this no longer necessary, and the corridor now issues direct into the eastern end of the palace.

[2] *Miscellanea Fiorentina di Erudizione e Storia*, by Signor Jodico del Badia.

Cosimo made over to him the entire control of home affairs, though still retaining in his own hands foreign affairs. In the same year (1565) Pope Pius IV. died and was succeeded by Pius V. (Michele Ghislieri), the stern old inquisitor, and a pitiless persecutor of the new religion. With such a Pope it was not difficult to see what kind of conduct would be most conducive to the maintenance of that paramount influence at the Vatican which it was Cosimo's earnest desire to retain, and the more so since affairs in France, Spain, and Germany showed that the time was approaching when he would be able to take the step for which he had long been preparing.

The character of the new Pope soon made itself felt throughout Italy; a general stamping out of Protestantism wherever it had taken root began. This placed in danger a man who had long been a firm friend of the Medici family, and who had done good service for Cosimo, in particular, in various capacities. Carnesecchi was a Florentine of good family who had been Protonotary Apostolic to Clement VII., and of so much influence with him that it was said that he rather than Clement was Pope. Some years after Clement's death he came under the influence and teaching of Valdès, became a Protestant, and ere long one of the leading Protestants in Italy. After spending some years in France he returned to Italy, but in 1557 was pronounced by Pope Paul IV. "a refractory heretic," and had to fly for his life. He fled to France to Catherine de' Medici, who protected him. On the death of Paul IV. he returned to Florence, where during the pontificate

of Pius IV. he remained unmolested, and was one of Cosimo's most trusted friends and advisers. But the election of Pope Pius V. placed Carnesecchi at once in danger—danger which was increased by his having recently entreated Cosimo to exert his great influence with the Emperor to bring about the assembly of a really Œcumenical Council in the centre of Germany, and to effect the Pope's personal attendance thereat. Pope Pius V., dreading the effect of Cosimo's influence if exerted in the manner urged by Carnesecchi, earnestly desired to remove this friend and adviser from Cosimo's side, and was eager to get hold of Carnesecchi and hand him over to the Inquisition. Catherine de' Medici, on the other hand, had written to Cosimo urging him to protect Carnesecchi in the same way as she had done, and to refuse the Pope's demand for his surrender. But Cosimo throughout life ruthlessly sacrificed all who came in the way of his plans; he was bent upon an object which only the Pope's favour could obtain for him, and he knew well that Carnesecchi's life would be the price. Therefore, to his lasting shame, he in July 1566 surrendered this faithful adherent of himself and his family to the Pope; and in October 1567 Carnesecchi was burnt in Rome by the Inquisition. Two years afterwards Cosimo received his reward. "Carnesecchi was the last of the chief reformers in Italy, and with his death the reforming spirit in that country, which at one time had been very strong, died out."[1]

[1] *The Cambridge Modern History*, vol. ii.

Grand Duke of Tuscany.

In 1569, the year of the battles of Jarnac and Moncontour in France, when Catherine de' Medici's troubles were at their height, Cosimo considered the time at last propitious for the step he had long contemplated. France was blazing from end to end with civil war; Spain was occupied with the contest in the Netherlands, and endeavouring also to take part in the conflict in France; England was embroiled with both France and Spain; and in Germany the Emperor Maximilian had his hands full with similar troubles. None were therefore likely to interfere actively against Cosimo's assumption of regal dignity. Accordingly we are informed that "owing to Cosimo's great influence with Pope Pius V., and his many good offices to the Papal See," that Pope now published a bull creating Cosimo I. "Grand Duke of Tuscany." In doing this the Pope was, of course, assuming the prerogative of the Emperor, but Cosimo trusted in time to get the latter to acquiesce in what was a *fait accompli*. Nor was the Pope's action unjustified from the general point of view. Cosimo had raised Tuscany to such a position of power and importance that her ruler was justly to be considered on a level with other sovereign rulers of states not in any way in advance of his in these respects. In February 1570 Cosimo was, with much ceremony, crowned in Rome by the Pope. Spain and Germany refused to acknowledge Cosimo's new rank; France and England, however, did so; and within the next few years the other powers of Europe one by one concurred.[1]

[1] Pope Pius V. died two years afterwards. He was succeeded by Gregory XIII. (1572-1585).

The shape of the new crown was peculiar, and was carefully laid down in the Pope's bull. This ordered that the crown of Tuscany was (unlike the French, Spanish, and other crowns) to be "radiated like that of the Eastern kings, alternate with the Florentine lily."[1] It was a royal crown with the points curving outwards, intended to represent the blades of the iris. In the centre of the front was a large red Florentine lily:[2] thus making the crest of Florence's ancient Republic the chief jewel of the royal crown. The sceptre was also peculiar; it was ordered to be surmounted by the Medici *palle*, and upon this the Florentine lily.

The portrait of Cosimo painted to commemorate this occasion shows him wearing his robes as Grand Duke, with on his head the new crown, and in his hand the sceptre.[3]

Thus had the Medici reached at length the summit of their career, and a crown was at last placed upon a Medici head. One hundred and seventy years from the time that Giovanni di Bicci, the humble banker of Florence, is first heard of, his descendant the head of the house entered the group of European sovereigns. Fate in irony had realised the long dream of Clement VII. in a manner far different from his intentions; and had placed the crown which he had schemed to gain in the future for his family upon the head not of a scion of the elder branch, but of the son of that Giovanni delle Bande Nere whom he had striven to keep from succeeding to the honours

[1] The iris.

[2] Usually heavily jewelled (*see* Plate LXXI.).

[3] Plate LX. In the background is seen the Ducal Palace as it was in his day.

COSIMO I., WEARING HIS NEWLY-GAINED CROWN AND BEARING THE SCEPTRE.
By Bronzino.

*Barton*] [*Uffizi Gallery.*

of the Medici, and had thought finally disposed of on the battlefield of Governolo.

The remaining four years of Cosimo's life were only notable for the general deterioration in his character, which, beginning to set in from the time of Eleonora's death, and increasing year by year, became in these last four years strongly pronounced. Leaving the entire government of the country to the inefficient hands of his son Francis, he lived chiefly in retirement at the villa of Castello with a new wife, not at all in his own rank,[1] named Camilla Martelli, whom he had married about the year 1571, and who was treated as a sort of morganatic wife. This marriage gave the greatest offence to his sons, who refused to recognise Camilla as really their father's wife; while this, and undignified disputes in which he was involved with her relations, caused Cosimo's latter days to be wanting in either peace or dignity. He died at the villa of Castello, on the 21st April 1574, at the age of fifty-five, after a reign of thirty-seven years.

Cosimo, whose tomb bears the inscription "Magnus Dux Etruriae Primus,"[2] was interred with great pomp in San Lorenzo, clad in his robes as Grand Master of the Order of Santo Stefano, and wearing his jewelled crown and sceptre and his Order of the Golden Fleece. The Medici were regardless of expense in the matter of crowns. They objected to wear crowns of which even the jewels

[1] She was the daughter of Antonio Martelli, a man in humble circumstances living in the Via de' Servi.

[2] "First Grand Duke of Etruria."

ornamenting them had been worn by their predecessors; and each Medici Grand Duke was buried wearing his actual crown, not an imitation of it, and with his jewelled sceptre by his side, an entirely fresh crown and sceptre being made for his successor. As a consequence, when in the early part of the nineteenth century the Medici coffins were plundered by thieves the latter sought chiefly for those of the Grand Dukes. Owing, however, to the darkness of the lower crypt, and the manner in which the coffins on removal thither had been piled together in different parts of it without any system, the thieves were only able to find the coffins of five out of the seven Medici Grand Dukes, those of Cosimo III. and Gian Gastone, which had no distinctive marks on the outside, escaping detection. These, however, were the only two in which the crown and sceptre were found when the coffins were opened in 1857 by the Commission appointed for the purpose,[1] that of Cosimo I. being among those found entirely plundered.

"The body was dressed in the robes of the Order of Santo Stefano, with under these a doublet of red satin, and hose of the same colour on the legs. His sword was extraordinarily large, and in the velvet lining of the scabbard, hidden by the gilded hilt, were enclosed a small dagger and a number of small *stiletti*, with very sharp points, almost as fine as needles, stuck into the lining of the scabbard as into a needle-case. The robbed and broken coffin did not contain the golden crown, the sceptre, and other ornaments which should have been found there."[2]

[1] *See* chap. xxxii. p. 516.

[2] *Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum*. 1857.

In Cosimo I. the prominent characteristic is a pitiless ferocity; no sentiment of generosity, magnanimity, or mercy ever stirred his nature. His enmity worked with as little pity, and as little remorse, as a machine. Death, prompt and cruel, ensued for all who failed to obey his will, or thwarted his purposes; the doors of the Bargello closed behind them, and the scaffold in its courtyard saw their end. Or if they escaped from Florence, then the hired assassin was equally sure. Together with this characteristic there was another, of meanness of character. Among other evidences of this there was in him, the son of the bravest leader of troops in Italy, that want of personal courage which so frequently accompanies a cruel nature. He never ventured into a battle himself, sending other men to risk their lives for his advantage; and he carefully surrounded himself with a body-guard, which his cruelties made a very necessary precaution.

But the defects of a cruel and ignoble disposition must not be allowed to hide his undoubtedly great work for his country. In thinking of Tuscany, we are too apt to regard it as it had become in the beginning of the eighteenth century, and so to lose sight of the prosperous kingdom which Cosimo I. created in the sixteenth. It is, indeed, strange to compare the small, misgoverned, and insignificant state which this son of Giovanni delle Bande Nere and Maria Salviati seized by his bold *coup d'état* of 1537—its capital half ruined by the long siege of 1530, its scanty territory devastated by the war, and its whole condition brought to degradation by Alessandro's five years' misrule—with the large and

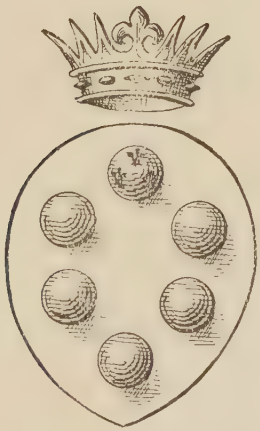
flourishing kingdom which Cosimo, its first Grand Duke, left to his successors. He found Tuscany a small and despised state, dependent on a foreign power, without troops, commerce, agriculture, or resources, with ruined towns, a wasted country, and a poverty-stricken population. He left her a large and independent kingdom, with a powerful army, a rising fleet, flourishing manufactures, wide commerce, sound laws, model public works, a well-ordered administration, and a thriving people. He successfully resisted the most powerful Pope of his time, and governed three others in succession; he saved Tuscany from becoming, like Milan, a province of Spain; and he made her the leading state in Italy. There is probably no other example of so small a state advancing within a period of some thirty years to a position of power and importance scarcely inferior to most of the monarchies of the time.

It is this comparison between what he found and what he left which gives the true measure of Cosimo I. In ability he did not fall far short of those earlier Medici who had advanced Florence over the heads of all her rivals in their time and made her the artistic and intellectual capital of Italy. It would have been well had he shown also those other qualities of character which they, in addition to their abilities, had possessed, of a generous and high-minded spirit, readiness to forgive injuries, mercy to enemies, courtesy of demeanour, and sympathy with the people; but these qualities were foreign to his nature, and his rule was that of an iron-handed tyranny.

It was Florence's own deliberate action which

had brought that tyranny upon her. On Alessandro's death she could, if she would, have reinstated her Republic. Completely untrammelled, and under no pressure from any direction, she deliberately of her own will subjected herself to the rule of a tyrant.

But tyrant as he was, the effects of his tyranny did not fall upon the mass of the people. And by his even-handed justice, his strong government, capable administration, sound fiscal laws, and advancement of the material prosperity of the country, Cosimo I. made the condition of the inhabitants of Tuscany one altogether superior to any which they had ever known before.



Arms of the Medici Grand Dukes, with the crown above the *palle*.

## CHAPTER XXV

### FRANCIS I.

*Born* 1541. (*Reigned* 1574-1587.) *Died* 1587.

The knell of the Medici fortunes has struck; though muffled at first, its distant tolling can henceforth be heard in the midst of all their grandeur. Almost from the very day that the crown, striven after for so many years, first by Giulio and then by Cosimo, was gained, this family's deterioration, both in abilities and character, set in. The crown now set above the *palle* in the family arms becomes but the signal of departing glory. For one hundred and seventy years we have seen the Medici steadily climbing upwards; for the next hundred and seventy years we see them sinking steadily down to their end. There were pauses in that downward course, but its general tendency was ever the same. And with Francis I., the eldest son of Cosimo, that decline begins.

It had begun five years before he actually came to the throne. Cosimo from the time that he gained the rank of Grand Duke gave up practically the entire government of the state to Francis, and, adopting an unworthy style of life, apparently disregarded the fact that his son's negligent rule

was sowing the seeds of serious harm to the administration of the country. The natural result ensued with extreme rapidity, and within two years of Cosimo's death misrule and corruption were rampant in every department of the State. Disorganisation in the administration of the police, and corruption in the judicial tribunals, soon produced an enormous growth of crime; and Francis's reign of thirteen years became a continuous record of bad government and social demoralisation. So that Tuscany, which under a good government might have escaped the general tendencies of the time, under a bad one did not fail to exemplify those tendencies.

At that period an intense ferocity appeared to have seized upon mankind. All regard for human life seemed to have disappeared from Europe in the bitter passions which the religious wars and persecutions had stirred up. Men had grown ruthless in their familiarity with torture and death, and wherever we look, whether it be in France, Spain, England, the Netherlands, or Germany, a ferocious and merciless cruelty, with a disregard for all justice, is the prevailing characteristic of the time, with murders and torturings as matters of common daily life. Tuscany, under the misrule of Francis I., had her share of these experiences, and was only so far fortunate in that they were not made still worse by the scourge of war; Italy, though it shared in the general demoralisation of the age, was (owing to the settlement made by the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis) able to look on whilst almost every other country was torn by a strife which seemed

to turn the wars of the time into the conflicts of tigers.

One result of this state of things was the view taken regarding the assassination of those upon whom a sentence of death had been passed. Rulers such as Cosimo I. and Francis I. looked upon hired assassins very much as if they were executioners; and such rulers seem to have seen no difference between this mode of putting out of life a man whose death had been decreed and that of the formal execution of a condemned prisoner. Even escape to another country procured no safety, since such assassins penetrated into all countries in pursuit of their victim. Murder and tragedy were thus ever present; while each event of the kind was multiplied fourfold in the imaginations of the people.

Francis I. was thirty-three years old when he succeeded to the throne. The fine portrait of him[1] which was painted by Paolo Veronese, and hangs in the state apartments of the Pitti Palace, shows him as he was at about the age of thirty-five; he wears the Order of the Golden Fleece, and on his cloak the cross of the Order of Santo Stefano. He porsessed much the same character as his father Cosimo, and had brilliant mental gifts, but whereas his father's chief interest had been the advancement of Tuscany, that of Francis was science; and this made all the difference possible to the country, since he refused to be drawn from his favourite pursuit to attend to public affairs, which consequently lapsed into the condition

[1] Plate LXI.

which has been noted. At the same time he inherited his father's tyrannical disposition towards the upper classes; with the result that this, when combined with general corruption in the administration and a defective fiscal policy caused a hatred to grow up against Francis which exceeded even that which had been felt against Cosimo. And this excessive hatred created a fruitful soil for the growth of every story of crime against Francis which fertile brains could originate. One of the latter's minor tyrannies was exercised towards his father's morganatic wife, Camilla Martelli. On succeeding to the throne, Francis, as the head of the family, having, according to the laws of Italy at that time, powers of life and death over all its members, consigned Camilla to incarceration in a convent; and there she remained for the rest of her life. The high taxes which he imposed on corn were specially disastrous to the agricultural colonies planted by his father to reclaim the waste lands of the Maremma, which colonies as a result were ruined, and these lands again became waste. On the other hand, Francis continued his father's plans for the development of Leghorn; but the chief steps in this work were taken subsequently by his brother Ferdinand, and the great success achieved belongs to the reign of the latter.

In each generation, from the time of Cosimo Pater Patriae in 1428 to that of Francis I. in 1575, every new head of the house had to meet an attack led by one or other of the principal families of Florence. That which came upon Francis was dealt with by him with less rigour than his father had displayed in 1537, but nevertheless with a

severity which brought him into great odium. In the first year of his reign he discovered a widespread plot to assassinate him, which had been formed by various members of the Pucci, Ridolfi, Capponi, and Machiavelli families. When discovered by Francis it was asserted that the plot had been abandoned; and this appears to have been true. Nevertheless he proceeded to deal out the severest punishment. All who had been concerned in the plot who did not make their escape were seized and put to death; many other persons declared to have been privy to it were also punished; and a vigorous confiscation of all property connected with them took place. The result was that a large number of the principal Florentine families were brought to degradation; which created an undying hatred against Francis among all the well-to-do classes of Florence. It was an inauspicious beginning to a new reign.

On the ruler of Tuscany becoming a crowned head, all the ceremonial of the court of a reigning sovereign had been introduced; and Francis, probably chiefly to gratify the desire of his wife, the Archduchess Joanna, kept up a great deal more state than his father had done. The court was maintained almost on the lines of that of Spain, which Francis made in all particulars his model.

"A number of gentlemen, divided in two departments, attended to the various branches of the household; sixty pages from the principal families of Italy and Germany were maintained

FRANCIS I., ELDEST SON OF COSIMO I.

By Paolo Veronese.

[*Brogi*] [*State Apartments, Pitti Palace.*

PIETRO, FIFTH SON OF COSIMO I.
By Bronzino.

*Alinari*] [*Uffizi Gallery.*

and educated at the palace in all the accomplishments and depravity of the day, but still without neglecting the arts and sciences, or the use of arms, equitation, and all the various acquirements of a gentleman."[1]

In 1576 the Emperor Maximilian II. (Francis's brother-in-law), without making any allusion to the action which the Pope had taken in the matter seven years before, not only formally conferred on Francis the rank of Grand Duke, but created Tuscany a Grand Duchy, which the Pope had been unable to do. A few months later Maximilian II. died, and was succeeded as Emperor by his eldest son, Rudolph II.[2]

In the summer of this year 1576, the second year of Francis's reign, two terrible tragedies in his family occurring within one week cast a black pall over the Ducal palace. The family at this time consisted of Francis, with his wife Joanna and their children, his youngest brother Pietro (married two years before to a niece of their mother, named like her Eleonora di Toledo), and his sister Isabella. The latter had continued to live at Florence after her father Cosimo's death, the proceedings of her husband, the Prince of Bracciano, not being of a nature to cause her to desire to make the Orsini palace at Rome her residence. Cardinal Ferdinand, their remaining brother, lived at Rome.

Pietro,[3] the youngest of the eight children of

[1] Napier's *Florentine History*, v. 326.

[2] In this same year died Giorgio Vasari, historian, painter, and architect, and author of the *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects.*

[3] Plate LXII.

Cosimo and Eleonora, deprived of his mother at eight years old, and disliked by his brothers, had grown up passionate, jealous, dissolute, and without a redeeming quality of any kind, and was now twenty-two. His young wife Eleonora, by this time nearly twenty, was universally pitied when at fifteen she came to Florence, a very beautiful and innocent young girl, to be married to him. This ill-assorted young couple lived in the Medici palace in the Via Larga. Pietro, altogether given up to an evil life, had a distaste for matrimony, and from the first treated Eleonora as badly as possible. He scandalised even the society of that time by his disgraceful orgies, while his young wife was left neglected and an object of pity. The natural results followed. Eleonora, made for love, but cast aside and neglected, fell in love with an agreeable and handsome youth of about her own age, Bernardino Antinori. Not long afterwards one of his friends quarrelled with Bernardino and attacked him in the narrow passage[1] running along the south side of the Strozzi palace; and Bernardino in defending his life killed his assailant. He at once gave himself up to the authorities, and was confined as a prisoner in the palace of his family until the Grand Duke's pleasure regarding him should be known. Eleonora, fearing for his life, was wild with grief, and regardless of appearances drove round and round the Antinori palace[2] in the hope of seeing and speaking with him at some window; but failed to see him. Bernardino

[1] Now closed.

[2] The palace which stands at the end of the Via Tornabuoni (nearly opposite the church of San Gaetano), and is now Messrs Haskard's bank.

was exiled to Elba; from thence he despatched a letter to Eleonora by what he supposed a trustworthy hand, but through a chapter of accidents the letter was taken to Francis, and at once caused Bernardino's condemnation to death. He was brought back to Florence, consigned to the Bargello, given only one hour to prepare for death, and executed on the 20th June. Eleonora's own fate followed quickly. On the 11th July she received a summons from Pietro to meet him at the villa of Cafaggiolo [1] (about fifteen miles from Florence on the Faenza road), leaving her four-year-old son, Cosimo, in Florence. Dreading the worst she embraced her little son again and again in an agony of tears and then set out for Cafaggiolo "plunged in grief and with a trembling heart." She reached there in the evening. Pietro made her sup with him, and then drawing his sword killed her.[2] Her body was at once placed in a coffin, and carried that same night into Florence, where it was buried in the New Sacristy in San Lorenzo. There thirty-two years afterwards it was seen when in 1608 the work on the new mausoleum was being executed. Francesco Settimanni in his diary says:—

"The writer from whom this account has been taken adds that in the year 1608 he saw the body of the said Lady Eleonora on the occasion when it was exhumed from the New Sacristy and carried to the vault;[4] and that she was as beautiful

[1] *See* p. 338.

[2] It was asserted that this murder of his sister-in-law was executed by Francis's order.

[3] That relating the deaths of Bernardino Antinori and Eleonora.

[4] Either the crypt of the mausoleum then being constructed (*see* chap. xxvi. p. 355), or more probably the adjoining crypt of the church of San Lorenzo,

as if living, without the corpse being in the least corrupted[1] or injured, and appeared exactly as if sleeping, and was dressed all in white."[2]

Eleonora's little son, Cosimo, died a few months after his mother, and is buried in one corner of the mausoleum.[3]

This story of Eleonora's murder is that which has always been believed, and it is to some extent corroborated by the fact that there is no tablet to her memory in the family mausoleum. At the same time it must be remembered that the story did not appear until a subsequent generation, and is not authenticated in any way;[4] so that we may be doing both Pietro and Francis a severe injustice if we accept it as undoubtedly true. At the time it occurred her death was declared to have been due to heart disease; while it is noticeable that the writer who describes having seen her body thirty-two years afterwards in so perfect a state of preservation saw no sign of wounds; which is peculiar if she were killed with the sword in the manner which had been related by him. After this episode Pietro was sent by Francis to the court of Spain, where he resided almost entirely for the rest

[1] This shows that there was no hurried burial, time having been given for the body to be embalmed.

[2] *Diario del Settimanni*, State Archives, Florence.

[3] When in 1857 his coffin was opened the body was found "clothed in white velvet embroidered with gold thread, and having on the head a little cap of black velvet surrounded with a circlet of flowers in metal filigree-work. On a tablet of silver fixed behind the head was an inscription saying, 'Cosimo, son of Pietro, and grandson of the Grand Duke Cosimo I., called away at four years old. Snatched from a great fortune. Born into this world in February 1571. Alas how quickly commanded to leave it, September 1576.'"

[4] Francesco Settimanni himself was a strong anti-Medicean.

of his life, becoming as much hated there as he was in Florence, and a constant thorn in the side of Tuscany.[1]

Isabella.

Five days after this sudden death of Francis's sister-in-law a second dreadful occurrence took place in connection with his sister Isabella. In this case a Medici was the victim, not the perpetrator, of the crime.

Isabella[2] was the most beautiful of the three daughters of Cosimo I. and Eleonora di Toledo. Clever, and highly accomplished, she was also of a kind-hearted disposition, and is said to have been the only one of the family who showed kindness to Bianca Capello.[3]

"Wit, beauty, and talent made her conspicuous among all the ladies of the day, and she captivated every heart but her husband's. Speaking French, Spanish, and Latin fluently, a perfect musician, singing beautifully, a poetess and *improvisatrice* by nature, Isabella was the soul of all around her, and the fairest star of the Medici."[4]

But it was her fate to be involved in, and to be the first victim of, a celebrated fourfold tragedy which caused the ruin of the great house of Orsini. She was now thirty-four, and had been for eighteen years married to Paolo Giordano Orsini, Prince of Bracciano, the head of the most powerful family in Rome, a race who for generations had made and unmade popes and intermarried with kings, and who possessed fortresses and domains all over Italy. The tragedy in which Isabella's

[1] He died in Spain in 1604.
[2] Plate LXIII.
[3] Page 322.
[4] *Origine e Descendenza de' Medici*, State Archives, Florence.

life terminated is that connected with Vittoria Accoramboni, the four persons who all lost their lives in it being Francesco Peretti (Vittoria's husband), Vittoria herself, Paolo Giordano Orsini, and Isabella de' Medici.

Vittoria Accoramboni, young, beautiful, vain, and ambitious, had captivated Orsini, who, indolent, pleasure-seeking, and no longer young, cared nothing for the wife whom he left to live in Florence while he spent his time in Rome. Vittoria, fired with the ambition of being the Princess of Bracciano, practically told Orsini, who was infatuated with her, that he must kill her husband and his own wife, and marry her. He, as head of the house of Orsini, with absolute powers of life and death over all members of his family, saw no difficulty, and proceeded to carry out her injunctions, by first putting to death Isabella, and then, as soon as opportunity offered, by similarly disposing of Peretti

Isabella, who had some suspicion of danger to herself, had written to Catherine de' Medici begging her to afford her an asylum, as nowhere in Italy could she be safe from the far-reaching power of Orsini; and Catherine had replied agreeing to do so, and had made arrangements to receive her; but it was too late. On the 16th July, Isabella, already horror-stricken at her young sister-in-law's sudden death a few days before, and made still more uneasy by her husband's unexpected and mysterious arrival at Florence, accompanied him by his request to their villa of Cerreto Guidi, near Empoli. She went with great misgivings, which she confided on the way thither to her friend, Lucrezia Frescobaldi,

whom she took with her. When they retired after supper to their own apartments for the night, her husband Orsini, while pretending to kiss Isabella, suddenly slipped a noose round her beautiful neck, and after a violent struggle strangled her. He had prepared for this crime by making a hole in the ceiling of the room and stationing four men in the room above, from which a rope with a noose at the end of it was let down through the hole and concealed behind the curtains of the window until the moment came that it was required. The room being intentionally kept rather dark this passed unobserved by Isabella, enabling him to effect successfully his cruel purpose.[1] It was given out that she had died from a fit of apoplexy while bathing her head.[2] This was followed in due time by the assassination of Peretti, Orsini sending a party of his soldiers to seize and kill the latter at the Villa Negroni in Rome, where Peretti was betrayed into their hands by Vittoria and killed.

The sequel is well known. Pope Gregory XIII.,[3] "guessing how and why these two had met their deaths," refused to allow Orsini to marry the widowed Vittoria. Orsini defied the Pope, and went through a mock marriage. The Pope then sent troops to arrest the murderer of Peretti, but the Orsini retainers beat them off.

[1] The room, with the hole in the ceiling, and a rope showing how the crime was executed, is still to be seen in the villa of Ceretto Guidi.

[2] She was buried in San Lorenzo, but there is no tablet to her memory in the family mausoleum. The diary of interments kept in that church mentions that the body when brought for burial was disfigured (*sfigurato*) owing to the manner of her death.

[3] The Pope who reformed the calendar. The new calendar (involving the dropping of twelve days) came into operation in January 1582.

Eventually Vittoria was seized and imprisoned in the castle of St. Angelo, but escaped; for four years the struggle went on, Orsini and Vittoria living at Bracciano, outside the Pope's jurisdiction. Then Gregory XIII. died (1585); whereupon they came to Rome to be married before another Pope should be elected, and the ceremony was hastily performed in the small family church inside the Orsini fortress. Within a few hours to their horror it was proclaimed that the Cardinal of Montalto, Francesco Peretti's uncle, had been elected as the new Pope; and they had to face the terrible Sixtus V., bent upon exacting vengeance for his nephew's murder. Orsini fled to Venice, was exiled, and then, broken in heart at the ruin of his family, died, after making a will leaving his remaining property to Vittoria, who had fled to Padua. But her husband's nearest relation, Ludovico Orsini, enraged at the property being left to her, suddenly burst into her house at midnight six weeks later with a party of masked men, and she was stabbed to the heart. Venice, however, did not permit such acts of private war, and a week afterwards Ludovico Orsini was himself arrested and put to death; and the ruin of the great Orsini family was complete. They never again recovered their former power.[1]

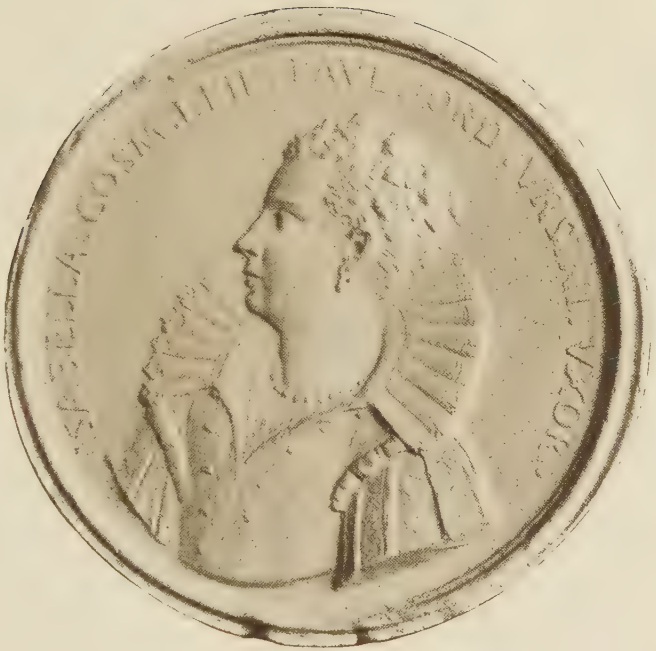
Joanna of Austria.

In 1578 Francis's first wife, Joanna of Austria,[2] died, at the age of thirty-one. She had been married thirteen years,

[1] The account of the later stages of this affair is drawn from Mr Marion Crawford's *Ave Roma Immortalis*.

[2] Plate LXIV. Regarding the statue of her, *see* p. 319.

PLATE LXIII.



ISABELLA DE' MEDICI, DAUGHTER OF COSIMO I.,
PRINCESS OF BRACCIANO.

*Burton*] [*Medallion.*

JOANNA OF AUSTRIA, FIRST WIFE OF FRANCIS I., WITH HER SON FILIPPO.

*Alinari* — *Uffizi Gallery.*

and had not had a happy life. She had no qualities to make her either liked by her husband or popular with the Tuscan people, being plain in appearance, of a cold nature, without personal charm, and imbued with a great deal of Austrian pride; and this first Grand Duchess of Tuscany[1] did not hide her contempt for the Tuscan monarchy, and the Tuscan people. Francis had never shown her the least affection, and during the whole of their married life was devoted to Bianca Capello, with whom he had been in love before his marriage to Joanna, and whom after the latter's death he married; and the unceasing complaints which Joanna addressed to her brother, the Emperor Maximilian, on the subject of her husband's behaviour did not make matters go more smoothly. Joanna's six children were Eleonora (born in 1565), Romola (born 1566), Isabella (born 1567), Anna (born 1569), Maria (born 1573), and Filippo (born 1577); but only two of these, Eleonora and Maria, survived childhood, while Romola and Isabella died before their mother. There is a peculiarity about both the portraits of Joanna in the Uffizi Gallery. In both she is shown with her little son Filippo. He was only ten months old when his mother died;[2] yet in the portrait of her shown in this book he is represented as a child about two years old, and in her other portrait as about four years old. Unless, therefore, these portraits of her were painted

[1] Eleonora di Toledo was never Grand Duchess, her husband gaining the rank of Grand Duke after her death.

[2] As can be seen by the dates on their respective tombs in the family mausoleum, Filippo being born in June 1577, and his mother dying in April 1578.

several years after her death (and after Francis had married another wife), which is extremely unlikely, it would seem that the figure of the child must have been added afterwards; though with what object, since he died at the age of five, is not apparent. Joanna of Austria was buried in the church of San Lorenzo; and when in 1857 the Medici coffins were opened her body was found so well preserved by the embalming process employed as to appear only just buried, even the colour of the face being unaltered.[1]

The year after Joanna's death Francis married Bianca Capello, whose unvarying lover he had been for fifteen years. The remaining nine years of his reign were almost entirely devoid of incident, either political or domestic, and his interests became more and more centred in those studies in natural science to which he was devoted. Francis had an absolute passion for chemistry and natural science. By far the greater part of his time was spent in his laboratory; and so reluctant was he to be drawn away from his experiments that he would often give audience to his Secretaries of State standing before his furnace, bellows in hand. It was he who first discovered the method of melting rock crystal,

[1] "Her blonde hair was dressed in the fashion of the time; in her ears were gold ear-rings with small gold clasps; her dress, on which were fixed a number of gold orange leaves, was of crimson satin, with a wide band of velvet of the same colour, embroidered with gold, running along the petticoat, as well as along its inside edge. She had also a bodice of rose colour, stockings of red silk, and velvet shoes, embroidered with gold, cut in a peculiar fashion and with very high heels. On a leaden plate behind her head was her name and title as Grand Duchess, stating that she was the daughter of the Emperor Ferdinand I., and giving the date of her decease." (*Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum* 1857.)

and he became distinguished for his skill and taste in making vases in this material, many of which are still to be seen in the Gem Room of the Uffizi Gallery. He was also the first to achieve the manufacture of porcelain in imitation of the Chinese, and he founded the existing porcelain industry of Florence which has attained much celebrity.

Francis had also the usual Medicean fondness for art and literature. He gave liberal encouragement to all artists, and in particular to Giovanni da Bologna (1524-1608), the leading sculptor of the day; and it was for Francis that the latter executed the well-known statue of *Mercury*, now in the museum of the Bargello.[1] For Francis was also executed by the same sculptor the group of the *Rape of the Sabines*, which now stands in the Loggia de' Lanzi, and the statue of *Abundance*, placed at the highest point of the Boboli gardens, facing the palace, and said to represent Francis's first wife, Joanna of Austria. His desire to promote the cause of literature resulted in the foundation in 1582 of the celebrated Accademia della Crusca, which still exists, and which was founded under his auspices by Francesco Grazzini and Leonardo Salviati for the purification of the Italian language, its name *crusca* (bran) referring to the sifting of the chaff from the flour.

[1] "Who does not know the Mercury of Gian Bologna, that airy youth with winged feet and cap, who with the *caduceus* in his hand, and borne aloft upon the head of Æolus, seems bound upon some Jove-commissioned errand? Who has not admired its lightness and truth of momentary action, which none but an artist skilful in modelling and well versed in anatomy could have attained? Since, Mercury-like, it has winged its way to the museums and houses of every quarter of the globe." (Perkins' *Tuscan Sculptors.*)

Founding of the Uffizi Gallery.

But there was another work undertaken by Francis which had more important consequences. He was the first to begin arranging the building which we now know as the Uffizi Gallery to adapt it for a picture gallery, and to begin placing there some of the family collection of pictures. Cosimo had erected the lower part of the building to accommodate the various public offices of the State, and on the second storey had placed ranges of workshops where his skilled workmen engraved, painted, made inlaid tables, executed models for statues, distilled essences and carried on many other minor arts.[1] Above this second floor was an open *loggia*, being part of the *Passaggio*[2] leading from the Palazzo Vecchio to the Ducal Palace; this *loggia* Francis now caused to be enclosed with glass, placing the architect and sculptor Buontalenti in charge of the work, and conveyed there a number of the family pictures scattered among their various villas. Buontalenti at the same time executed the statue of Francis (in the dress of a Roman knight), placed over the portico at the southern end of the gallery, facing the Palazzo Vecchio. Thus was begun a work which after generations of the Medici made one of Florence's greatest possessions. The great naval war between England and Spain, the terrible conflict in France, the battles and atrocities deluging the Netherlands with blood, were the events taking place in other countries while Florence was laying the foundations of her great picture gallery; and the peace

[1] Among those who worked here for Cosimo was Benvenuto Cellini.
[2] Chap. xxiv. p. 293.

ELEONORA DE' MEDICI, DAUGHTER OF FRANCIS I., DUCHESS OF MANTUA.
By Pulzoni.

*Brogi*] [*Pitti Gallery.*

BIANCA CAPELLO, AT THE AGE OF TWENTY.

By Titian.

(This picture, formerly in the Torre del Gallo, has now disappeared.)

*Brogi*

which she thus enjoyed made her lot by comparison happy, even though under the tyranny of Francis I.

In 1582 Francis lost his only son, Filippo, at the age of five. This was a serious loss to him, as he had no children by his second wife, and the crown would therefore go at his death to his brother Ferdinand, between whom and himself there was no love lost. In 1583 Francis gave his eldest daughter Eleonora,[1] now eighteen, in marriage to Vincenzo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua.[2] Eleonora's portrait by Pulzone, in the Pitti Gallery, shows her to have had considerable beauty. Her dress is chiefly remarkable for its splendid example of the well-known Medici collar, which has round its edge a string of small pearls. In the same year Francis's daughter Anna died at the age of fourteen. Thus out of his six children four had died in their childhood, one daughter was married, and there only remained to him his daughter Maria, at this time a child of ten.

Francis I. continued his father Cosimo's practice of private trading, and operating on a large scale amassed great wealth; and at his death a vast amount of treasure was found to have been collected by him in the fortress of the Belvedere. He died in October 1587 at the villa of Poggio a Caiano at the age of forty-six,[3] his wife Bianca dying at the same time; and his brother Ferdinand succeeded to the throne.

[1] Plate LXV.
[2] There is a portrait of him in the Uffizi Gallery.
[3] *See* p. 333.

## BIANCA CAPELLO

*Born* 1543. (*Became Grand Duchess* 1579.) *Died* 1587.

Bianca Capello's romantic history and celebrated beauty have made a great impression in Italy; pictures of her are numerous, and her story in various forms is related in every chronicle of the time. And lavish as has been the praise accorded to her beauty, scarcely less so has been the abuse showered upon her name. While she must certainly be held to deserve a portion of this condemnation, by far the greater part has been quite undeserved. Francis loved her with a steadfast affection for twenty-four years, never showing any regard for any one else; and the deep hatred felt for Francis attached itself also to any one for whom he showed any regard, and most of all, therefore, to Bianca Capello. Added to this she was a Venetian. For over a hundred years Venice had been Florence's bitter foe and rival; in almost every war they had been opposed to each other; every enemy of Florence found an asylum out of reach of her wrath at Venice; even in the domain of Art they were rivals; and no Venetian need expect to be received at Florence with a welcome. Lastly, Bianca was throughout life strongly hated by Francis's brother Ferdinand, who succeeded him as Grand Duke, and all who wished to curry favour with the latter had an easy means of doing so by inventing stories against her after her death. These three causes together resulted in the imputation of crimes to Bianca by the Florentines of

which her character was altogether incapable. All Francis's tyrannies were by those who suffered from them placed on her shoulders, and the more they hated Francis, the more they attributed the cause of his acts to the Venetian to whom he was so devoted.

Bianca Capello[1] was the daughter of one of the proudest and most illustrious of the nobles of Venice, Bartolommeo Capello, and was brought up in all the splendour and luxury customary in a noble Venetian family of that age. She had in a pre-eminent degree that quality sometimes seen of an inherent and unstudied attractiveness, independent of beauty; while in her case to this was added beauty also. It may be imagined that the combination made her irresistible.

"Grace and fascination hung round her movements, and whether grave or gay, silent or speaking, quiet or in motion, she was always completely attractive; while without any particular regularity of features she concentrated within herself the varied influence of every feminine beauty."[2]

No wonder that Titian desired to paint her portrait, especially as in addition to her other attractions she had hair of that beautiful auburn-red tint only seen in Venice, and so admired of all artists. His portrait of her[3] at the age of twenty-one (Plate LXVI.) is one of the most beautiful of Titian's portraits.

About the year 1560, when Bianca was seventeen, she fell in love with a youth a year or two

[1] Plate LXVI.
[2] Napier.
[3] Formerly in the Torre del Gallo, Florence.

older than herself belonging to a Florentine family, named Piero Buonaventura, a gentleman by birth, but whose family were in reduced circumstances, while he himself was a clerk in the Salviati bank, which was situated in one of the narrow streets of Venice, exactly opposite the Capello palace. Her family would have killed her rather than allow such a marriage, and they were married secretly. But an accident threatened suddenly to reveal what they had done, and they had at a moment's notice to fly for their lives. Piero hurried his young wife into a gondola, they escaped by sea, and eventually reached Florence, where his father and mother were living in great poverty.[1] All Venice was horrified at such an insult to its proud aristocracy; the Capello family were powerful, and the whole Venetian nobility vowed vengeance on Piero for his intolerable audacity; a reward of 2,000 ducats was offered to any one who would murder him, and his uncle, Giambattista Buonaventura, was thrown into prison and there died. Meanwhile, in Florence Bianca had no easy lot. Piero's mother was bedridden; his father, unable to support this addition of two extra members to his family, was forced to discharge their only servant; and the luxuriously brought-up daughter of a Venetian noble had to take the servant's place, and become a household drudge. At the same time fear for Piero's life, and dread on Bianca's part of falling into her enraged father's hands, kept them both prisoners. That Bianca bore uncomplainingly all that this great change must have

[1] Their house was in the Piazza San Marco, on the south side, facing the church.

meant to her for the sake of her love for Piero (who, after all, showed himself a worthless creature) speaks well for her natural good-heartedness. She was despised, hard worked, condemned by all, and execrated by the whole aristocracy of Venice, but she cared not so long as Piero remained true to her. During this time of their poverty a daughter was born to them, Pellegrina Buonaventura, who afterwards married Ulisse Bentivoglio.

In the year 1563 Francis, then twenty-two, the eldest son of the Duke of Florence, crossing one day the Piazza San Marco, looked up and saw Bianca (whose story all Florence knew) at a window, and at once fell in love with her. She was then twenty, and at the height of her beauty. Soon afterwards she was entrapped into a meeting with him at the house of the Marchesa Mondragone, the wife of Francis's Spanish tutor, who lived at the house called the Casino, on the west side of the Piazza San Marco.

"Startled by the Prince's sudden and unexpected appearance in a private room, she fell on her knees, declared herself bankrupt of everything but honour, and implored his forbearance and protection; and for a time he obeyed, and left her alone."[1]

Soon, however, he began pursuing her with his attentions; even fears for Piero's life contributed; while the latter, heartless and contemptible, who was tired of her and of their poverty-stricken life, failed to protect her in any way, and accepted an office which Francis procured for him at the court,

[1] Trollope.

and allowed a palace to be taken for them in the Via Maggio, near the Ducal Palace. Piero thus promoted became proud, insolent, dissolute, and generally detested, and after a short time was one evening murdered at the corner of the Via Maggio, near the Ponte Sta. Trinità, by one of the Ricci family whom he had insulted.

Francis remained Bianca's devoted lover all his life, and his marriage to the Archduchess Joanna of Austria in December 1564, when Bianca was twenty-one, made no difference in this. When not at work in his laboratory, he spent most of his time at Bianca's house in the Via Maggio.[1] The Archduchess Joanna, furious at this neglect of herself in favour of a rival so far beneath her in rank, wearied her brother the Emperor with complaints, but without avail. And when she died in April 1578 Francis married Bianca, who was by this time thirty-five.

At first, on account of the recent death of Joanna of Austria, they were privately married in the small chapel in the Palazzo Vecchio, but in the following year this was succeeded by a very magnificent marriage in San Lorenzo; while at the same time, strange to say, a grand ceremony in honour of the event took place at Venice. Venice, which had cast ignominy upon Bianca's very name, now hastened to do it honour, and not only received with a stately ceremonial and hypocritical compliments an embassy from Florence on

[1] Bianca Capello's house is still to be seen in the Via Maggio (an abbreviation for Via Maggiore) with her strange uncouth coat of arms over the entrance, the front of the house being profusely decorated with frescoes. There is an underground passage from it to the Pitti Palace, now closed.

BIANCA CAPELLO, SECOND WIFE OF FRANCIS I., AT THE AGE OF THIRTY.
By Bronzino.

*Alinari*] [*Pitti Gallery.*

the occasion, but promulgated a public decree in Bianca's honour, while the city of the Adriatic "blazed with countless illuminations." This was followed by a pompous embassy from Venice to Florence to invest Bianca "with the prerogatives of her new rank." Bianca was unlike her predecessor in another respect; she did not care for ostentation and the degree of ceremony attaching to a high position. But Francis was determined on this occasion to show her every kind of honour that he could devise. There followed tournaments, bull-fights, balls, a musical drama, feasts, and every sort of pastime for the people, and finally, on the 12th October 1579, in the great hall of the Palazzo Vecchio, an imposing ceremony took place at which Bianca was first declared by the Venetian ambassador to be "a true and particular daughter of Venice," and then, seated by the side of her husband Francis, was crowned with the crown of Tuscany. After which the whole assembly, led by the Grand Duke and the new Grand Duchess, proceeded in state to the cathedral, where High Mass concluded the ceremony. Francis spent on this marriage 300,000 ducats: equal to about one year's ordinary revenue of the ancient Republic.

Bianca Capello was Grand Duchess for nine years. In that position she continued to be very much the same as she had always been, not showing any exaltation on account of being raised to so high a rank, nor any desire for pomp and grandeur,[1] and preferring whenever possible a

[1] It is noticeable that though there are so many pictures of her there are none in court dress or with the crown of Tuscany displayed by her side, as in the case of every other Grand Duchess.

country life with Francis at one or other of their villas, removed from Florence and its abuse of her. For Francis's tyrannies continued to heap condemnation upon her head; and whatever untoward event occurred, it was always in some manner attributed to her. It is almost unnecessary to say that when Francis's only son Filippo died in 1582 it was declared that she had poisoned him; and this tale, like others of the kind, was handed down after her death, regardless of the fact that had she been guilty of such a thing the suspicious Francis would certainly have found it out and lost all his affection for her; as well as of the fact that the one ruling desire which governed all Bianca's life was to please him.

But the people had another reason for hating Bianca Capello and readily accepting every story against her. They believed her to be a *witch*, and openly called her so. The hint had not improbably been dropped by Ferdinand. But the only kind of witchery that Bianca knew was that of "woman's witching ways"; and none ever possessed it in a higher degree. And without making light of the one great fault she did commit, it may well be noted in her favour that although possessed of this exceptional power of attraction we never hear, amidst all the stories against her promulgated after her death, one single breath charging her with infidelity to Francis: a significant fact under the circumstances. It is also to be noted that all writers credit her, not only with considerable talent, but also with various good qualities. Her portrait by Bronzino, in the Pitti Gallery, at the

age of thirty,[1] has a sweet expression. He knew her well and it is sure to be a good likeness. It must have been the last portrait that Bronzino ever painted, as he died very shortly afterwards.

The feeling with which Bianca was regarded by her brother-in-law Ferdinand, who lived at Rome and was on bad terms with Francis, was a prominent factor in her lot. The inclination which the Florentines had to attribute to Bianca every crime committed, or imagined to have been committed, by Francis, was felt by Ferdinand, "her most deadly enemy," to a still greater degree; and he over and over again remonstrated with Francis for having anything to do with her, and endeavoured to get her banished from Tuscany. The hatred he felt for her amounted to a mania; and his refusal after her death to allow her body decent burial,[2] his causing her armorial bearings to be erased, and his speaking of her on all occasions in terms of opprobrium showed how deep was the feeling which (unappeased even by her death) was nourished by him for so many years against her. When he became Grand Duke the time-serving contemporary writers followed suit, heaping upon her memory every possible vilification, and handing down every tale which a scandal-loving age could invent to her discredit; and this is the real origin of the many stories which have passed as the history of Bianca Capello. The true Bianca was a less exaggerated, and far more natural woman.

[1] Plate LXVII. There is a cameo of Bianca, by Bernardo di Castel Bolognese, in the Bargello Museum, Florence, which many consider to give a superior idea of her beauty to any portrait which exists.

[2] Pages 335-336.

She had many faults, but they did not run in the direction of murder and poison, as a sensation-loving populace (ready to believe anything against a Venetian) confidently asserted.

After Bianca became Grand Duchess she summoned her brother, Vittorio Capello, to Florence, and he soon became a great favourite with Francis, and almost his sole adviser. This still further incensed Ferdinand, and after a time he contrived to put such pressure upon his brother as to cause him to dismiss Vittorio Capello again to Venice. Many of Bianca's letters to her brother, in her clear bold handwriting, are to be seen in the Florentine archives, and they show both her character and how highly educated she was. Bianca is reported to have shown a good spirit towards her brother-in-law Ferdinand on various occasions, constantly endeavouring to reconcile the two brothers, and by her amiability at times succeeding temporarily in doing so; while as a part of these endeavours she several times persuaded Francis to give large sums of money to Ferdinand to supply his financial necessities, these latter being very great owing to his expensive tastes in the collection of the treasures of Greek art.[1]

At last in 1587[2] came the end, Francis and Bianca both dying together, and at that place which above all they would have chosen, the villa of Poggio a Caiano. Notable on many other accounts, this villa has ever since gained its chief interest as the place where the lives were simultaneously ended of these two, who, whatever else

[1] *See* chap. xxvi. pp. 340-341.

[2] The year that Mary, Queen of Scots, was put to death.

they were, had been unswervingly devoted to each other for twenty-four years.

Poggio a Caiano.

The villa of Poggio a Caiano,[1] since the days when it had been built by Lorenzo the Magnificent, had been much enlarged and improved by successive heads of the family. Its great hall had, under the auspices of Leo X., been decorated with frescoes typifying the deeds of Cosimo Pater Patriae and Lorenzo the Magnificent,—frescoes which had been in succession the work of Andrea del Sarto, Pontormo, Franciabigio, and Allori. The ceiling and walls of its dining-room had been painted so as to give the illusion of being seated in a Tuscan garden; the reception-rooms[2] were hung with portraits of prominent members of the family; the wide-spreading park, with the Ombrone flowing through it, afforded the pleasures of the chase; the well laid-out gardens were an unceasing delight to all who saw them; while from the broad terrace spread out a view exemplifying all the special beauty of a Tuscan landscape.

Poggio a Caiano had always been a favourite residence of Bianca Capello,[3] and she and Francis had spent many days there together, hunting in the park, riding about the surrounding country, and enjoying other outdoor pursuits. In October 1587 they went there to enjoy once more its

[1] Plate LXVIII. It is now a royal villa of the King of Italy.

[2] Plate LXIX.

[3] It still contains a few reminiscences of her, including the room in which she died, a pleasing portrait of her by Bronzino, and a pretty portrait of a girl of about fourteen who was Bianca's adopted daughter.

charms at that beautiful season of the year, and to revel in a country life away from the formalities of the court. But they had also another reason. The sincere endeavours which all writers acknowledge that Bianca constantly made to conciliate Ferdinand and heal the breach between the brothers had once more been successful. A reconciliation had been effected, and to cement it Francis and Bianca had invited Ferdinand to come from Rome, and join them in a visit to Poggio a Caiano.

Accordingly Ferdinand arrived at Florence, was received at the Ducal Palace by Francis and Bianca with every sign of cordiality, and together with the Archbishop of Florence accompanied them to Poggio a Caiano. There they remained for some days in complete harmony, the Grand Duchess and the Archbishop exerting themselves to maintain these cordial relations between the brothers who had so long been at enmity. But this happy state of affairs had a melancholy ending. On the 8th October the whole party went out hunting; during the day the Grand Duke while violently heated sat down by a small lake in the park and caught a severe chill, ending in fever, which he insisted on treating himself, taking for it some of the most unheard-of medicines with which his chemical researches had made him acquainted,[1] notwithstanding that his indisposition steadily grew worse and was accompanied with violent

[1] The chief of these was a medicine called *Bezzuar* (a secretion formed in the biliary ducts of certain animals, particularly the crocodile, the porcupine, the Peruvian goat, and the Indian gazelle) which was supposed by the Arabian doctors to be a general cure for every malady, and which in consequence of its high estimation by them was sold at an immense price.

THE ROYAL VILLA OF POGGIO A CAIANO.

(The frieze over the portico is by Luca della Robbia.)

*Alinari*]

RECEPTION ROOM IN THE VILLA OF POGGIO A CAIANO.

*Brogi*]

sickness. On the ninth day of this illness his malady took a more serious turn; this was increased by Bianca's inability to nurse him (as she was accustomed to do), she having been herself taken ill on the 13th October of a bad type of fever. Francis became rapidly worse, and, after forty-eight hours of great agony, expired on the 19th October. Meanwhile Bianca, seriously ill at the same time, and unable to go to her husband, was consumed with anxiety about him, and her enquiries for him were incessant. She had always been accustomed to say that "between her death and his, hours, not days, would elapse"; and so it proved. After six days' illness, feeling herself to be dying, and not knowing that her husband was already dead, she sent him her parting words by her confessor, Fra Maranta, weeping as she said: "Give my farewell to my Lord Francesco de' Medici, and say to him that I have always been most faithful and most loving towards him; tell him that my illness is made so great because of his; and beg him to pardon it if I have ever offended him in anything." In order to prevent her hearing sounds from the apartment of the Grand Duke (which was near hers) such as would reveal to her that he was dead, his body was carried down to a room on the ground-floor of the villa.[1] But the unusual trampling of feet in the passages, the agitated and tearful aspect of her attendants, and the noise of carriages and horses

[1] That which is now shown to visitors as the room of Bianca Capello, with a stone tablet on the wall to that effect. Though this is an error, it was in this room that their two bodies were laid side by side and together prepared for burial; which is perhaps the reason that it became called by Bianca's name.

in the open space below as Ferdinand and the Archbishop took their hasty departure to Florence, soon awakened her to the knowledge that Francis was dead. For a while she lay silent; then after murmuring a few broken sentences she breathed a very deep sigh and said calmly: "And likewise also it accords with my own wish that I should die with my lord." After which she became too ill to speak, and soon afterwards expired, dying eleven hours after her husband.[1]

Of course it was inevitable under the circumstances that Ferdinand should be suspected of having poisoned them both. The fact that by the death of his brother he succeeded to the throne, joined with his well-known hatred of Bianca, made his guilt apparently certain. He at once ordered a *post-mortem* examination of the two bodies, and the doctors reported that there was no trace of poison in either case, but naturally such a report carried little weight; so that the common theory has always been that Francis and Bianca were poisoned by Ferdinand. Side by side with this theory, however, there has been another. Bianca had been too long a subject of vituperation for an endeavour not to be made in some way to throw the guilt upon her, however difficult in this case to do so. Hence we have the well-known story of the tart supposed to have been prepared by Bianca in order to poison Ferdinand, but eaten by accident by Francis, and that Bianca, seeing this, eat of it also, being determined not to survive him; a story

[1] The above account of the deaths of Francis and Bianca is taken from the records contained in Doc. I., III., IX., and XVI., *Archivio Storico Italiano*, State Archives, Florence.

which, notwithstanding its almost palpable untruth, has obtained wide credence.[1]

The account, however, given above of this affair (which is that disclosed by the State archives unearthed within recent years by the patient research of the late Signor G. E. Saltini) shows plainly that Bianca was not even present when Francis became seriously ill, she having then been for four days ill in bed. And it is now considered certain, not only that Bianca was perfectly innocent (which is almost self-evident), but that Ferdinand was innocent also. All historians are now convinced that it was no case of poison at all, and that Francis and Bianca died from the natural causes assigned by the doctors as the result of the *post-mortem* examination, Bianca from dropsy, from which she had suffered for two years, and which was aggravated by her attack of fever, and Francis chiefly through the absurd remedies which he persisted in taking to cure his indisposition. Moreover, Ferdinand's history during the succeeding twenty-two years as Grand Duke showed very distinctly that he was not the kind of man who could be guilty of such a crime.

Ferdinand, however, inspired by his inordinate hatred of Bianca, was led into conduct which was extremely short-sighted. He not only refused to allow her decent burial, but also ordered the destruction of everything that could recall her memory. He caused her armorial bearings to be erased from the escutcheon of the Medici and

[1] One thing, however, this story incidentally shows, namely, the certainty universally felt of Bianca's undying affection for Francis.

replaced by those of Austria, when obliged to mention her name would not give her or allow others to give her the title of Grand Duchess, and even in a public document designated her as "La pessima Bianca." By this conduct Ferdinand used the best means possible for making it supposed that he desired to divert suspicion from himself, and for confirming in men's minds the idea that he was guilty.

The two bodies were together brought back to Florence. That of Francis was embalmed,[1] and buried in the church of San Lorenzo[2] with the ceremonial customary in the case of a Grand Duke; but when the architect Buontalenti asked Ferdinand where the body of the Grand Duchess should be buried, he replied: "Where you please; we will not have her amongst *us*." Her body was therefore wrapped simply in an ordinary winding sheet and buried without ceremony, none know where. And so, among the Grand Duchesses of Tuscany, one, the second, is missing from that great mausoleum where all the rest lie buried; and in its crypt Francis I. has by his side the first wife

[1] When in 1857 the Medici coffins were opened the body of Francis was found, like that of Joanna, completely preserved by the very effective embalming process that had been employed. "The face accorded in every way with the numerous portraits of him; the hands were curled up and contracted, seeming to accord with the stories related of his death which assert that he died in the spasms of poisoning.* The body was clothed in a plain black garment of camel-hair, without any distinguishing sign of his high rank. His name and titles as Grand Duke, and date of his death, were on a small leaden plate behind the head." (*Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum.* 1857.)

[2] The family mausoleum not being as yet in existence, Francis, Joanna, and their children were buried at first in the New Sacristy. Their remains were subsequently removed to the mausoleum when it was afterwards built (chap. xxix. pp. 469-470).

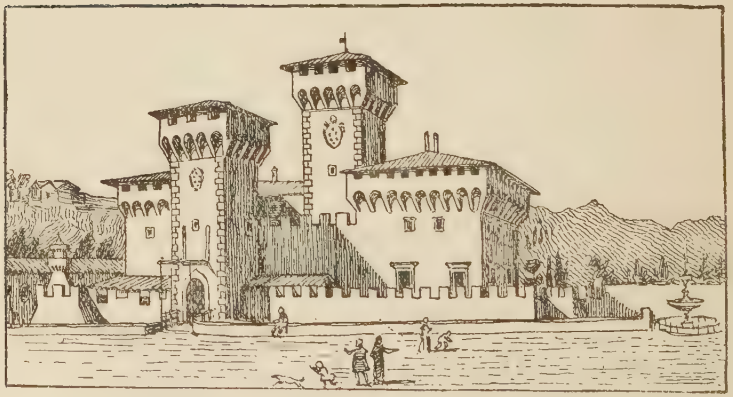
* This in 1857 was still the accepted theory.

whom he so disliked, and who was Grand Duchess for four years, but not the second wife, who was Grand Duchess for nine, and was the only person whom throughout life he had loved, or who loved him. But to Bianca it mattered nothing to what obscurity her body was consigned; for her memory has lived on notwithstanding all Ferdinand's efforts to obliterate it, while the accusations so freely spread abroad against her have gradually shown themselves to be untrue.

Bianca Capello was forty-four when she died. Undoubtedly, notwithstanding all that can justly be said on the other side, she was a woman who deserved a better record than the distorted picture of her which was handed down to posterity owing to the insensate hatred entertained for her by the brother of her husband who succeeded him as Grand Duke. Regarding her one grave fault it has been remarked that, "thrown while yet a mere girl into temptation, distress, and danger, with a warm heart and strong sensibility, her natural protector false, despicable, and utterly selfish, assailed by unwonted hardship and suffering, reduced from the splendour and refinement of exalted station to perform the menial offices of a starving household, with a youthful prince at her feet, and the glimmer of a throne in the distance, she finally sank under temptation, and became—probably not all that her enemies have described her. In an age of infidelity she was at least faithful to the Grand Duke, and probably would have been faithful to her husband had he taken any pains to keep her so."[1] Bianca Capello, in fact, shows herself as one in whom

[1] Napier.

throughout life love reigned supreme. And the true essence of her character is seen in the girl who abandoned all the grandeur and luxury belonging to a Venetian noble's daughter for the man she loved, and in the wife who felt that it "accorded with her own wish to die with her lord," and when she knew that he was dead had no desire to live any longer.



The villa of Cafaggiolo. (*From an eighteenth-century print.*)

# CHAPTER XXVI

## FERDINAND I.

*Born* 1549. (*Reigned* 1587-1609.) *Died* 1609.

FERDINAND,[1] the fourth son of Cosimo I. and Eleonora di Toledo, who had been made a cardinal when he was fourteen, at the time of the death of his mother and his brothers, Giovanni and Garzia, was twenty-five years old when his father died and his brother Francis succeeded to the throne. He and Francis differed violently on every subject; it merely required that a proposal should emanate from one of them for it to be opposed by the other; and after a time they kept altogether apart. During the thirteen years of his brother's reign Ferdinand resided entirely at Rome, where he became a strong power at the Vatican. Though a cardinal, he never took holy orders. Fierce, haughty, bold, and independent, and at the head of a powerful faction in the Curia, he feared no Pope whatever. On one occasion he withstood even the ferocious and tyrannical Sixtus V. on the subject of wearing arms and armour in the Vatican, which he, Ferdinand de' Medici, declined to abandon.

[1] Plate LXX. There are many portraits of Ferdinand, but the best is this one painted at Rome while he was still a cardinal, by Alessandro Allori.

At another time he by his boldness and resource saved the life of his friend, Cardinal Farnese. The latter had been condemned by Sixtus V. to be executed, and the hour for his execution fixed. But Ferdinand put on all the clocks in the Vatican by one hour, and then boldly facing the Pope petitioned for Farnese's pardon, and practically forced the Pope to grant it, the latter, however, only doing so because he thought that the hour for Farnese's execution was already past. Then Ferdinand stopped the execution on the authority he had extracted from the Pope, and his friend's life was saved.

**Art Collections.**

At Rome Ferdinand signalised himself in two ways. He showed much capacity in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs, being notable in particular as the founder of the great missionary establishment, the Propaganda; and he was still more distinguished as a great collector of the works of classic art. It was a time in Rome when the greater part of the collections of sculpture of the classic age which had been unearthed and gathered together in the Vatican by Popes Julius II., Leo X., Clement VII., and Paul III., had been scattered by subsequent Popes who cared nothing about art;[1] and in Ferdinand's time the Popes had not yet begun again to take any interest in such things.[2] Ferdinand, on the other hand,

[1] Especially was this the case in regard to Pius V. (1565-1572), who deliberately got rid of the art collections of the Vatican.

[2] The great collection of sculpture which now forms the chief possession of the Vatican was practically begun, nearly a hundred years later, by Pope Clement XIV. (1769-1775.)

PLATE LXX.

FERDINAND I., FOURTH SON OF COSIMO I., IN HIS DRESS AS A CARDINAL BEFORE HE BECAME GRAND DUKE.

By Alessandro Allori.

*Brogi*] [*Pitti Gallery.*

inheriting the same tastes as his ancestors, purchased eagerly all such works which he could obtain, and became the chief collector of the time in Rome. He built the celebrated Villa Medici at Rome, and there he collected an immense number of the most priceless works of Greek and Roman sculpture. These included the *Venus de' Medici* (found in the villa of Hadrian at Tivoli), the group of *Niobe*[1] *and her children* (found near the Porta San Paolo in 1583), the *Dancing Faun*, the *Wrestlers*, the *Knife-whetter*, the *Apollino*, and many statues of classic times, busts of Roman emperors, and other works of antiquity, which were all subsequently removed by degrees to Florence by him or his successors, and now adorn the staircases and corridors of the Uffizi Gallery. Thus Ferdinand, before he was Grand Duke, purchased out of his own private funds the six best examples of Greek art which Florence possesses; and, except the *Apollo Belvedere*, the *Laocoon*, and the *Torso of Hercules*, the best which were at that time known. As regards the *Venus* (which being purchased by Ferdinand immediately it was found henceforth received his family name) it is too much the fashion to decry its excellence, solely because a former generation erred in the opposite direction. It has been said that this statue cannot be understood at a single visit; while Byron's well-known words about it remain as true as ever. Of the *Apollino* Shelley said that it was "like a spirit even in dreams."

[1] "O Niobe, con che occhi dolenti
Vedev' io te, segnata in su la strada,
Tra sette e sette tuoi figliuoli spenti."
—Dante, *Purgatorio*, xii. 37.

Ferdinand was thirty-eight years old when his brother Francis died. As the latter left no son Ferdinand resigned his cardinal's rank (together with a good prospect of being the next Pope), and succeeded his brother as Grand Duke of Tuscany. His conduct with reference to Bianca Capello is not to be looked upon as a true indication of his character, but rather as a monomania on that particular point. His whole conduct during the long period of twenty-two years that he was Grand Duke (and as such a mark for the searching hostile criticism of those who watched for any cause of offence in the head of this family) showed him to be a man of high character whose life gave no cause of offence to any. Two Medici Grand Dukes preceded him, and four followed him, but he was superior to them all; for though his achievements, great as they were, did not equal those of his father Cosimo, this high character and exemplary conduct more than restored the balance.

On ascending the throne Ferdinand reversed the previously existing foreign policy of siding with Spain, and began to establish relations with France, thus returning to Tuscany's older policy. Unlike Francis, he had always been on friendly terms with Catherine de' Medici; and before the year 1587 was ended he had arranged with her that her favourite granddaughter, Christine of Lorraine, then twenty-two, should be given to him in marriage. This was, however, for some little time delayed, first by the sudden death of Christine's father, the Duke of Lorraine, and then by the disturbances in France. Nor did the

marriage appear a very propitious one; rumours were rife at the French court which declared that the proposed bridegroom was the murderer of his brother and sister-in-law; while in the existing condition of France it was thought unsafe for Christine at present to take the journey. For it was a troubled time. Spain's great Armada was about to sail to attack England, and Spain was laying plans to obtain possession of French ports; while in France civil war was raging, the League being in possession of Paris, and the King (Henry III.), with the States-General, having to take refuge at Blois. Ferdinand sent an embassy, headed by Orazio Rucellai, to escort Christine to Florence, but they had to remain at Blois until March 1589 before it was safe for her to travel; and during this time much occurred. In July 1588 the Armada made its attack on England, and in a fortnight was entirely destroyed. Meanwhile Catherine de' Medici was evidently dying, and Christine could not leave her. In December the murder at Blois of the Duke of Guise threw all the court into confusion and terror. On the 5th January 1589 Catherine de' Medici died, Christine being with her to the last; and in March the latter started from Blois on a somewhat melancholy journey, all the court being sorry to lose one who was universally liked, and she herself being very sad at bidding good-bye to France. She was accompanied for a long distance from Blois by a brilliant cavalcade, including Henry III. himself, who showed her great affection at parting. At Marseilles she and her escort found the fleet

which had been waiting there for her for months; and in due course she arrived at Florence.

The marriage festivities at Florence lasted a month, and were on the most splendid scale.

"Florence resembled the city of a fairy tale rather than the sober habitation of common men. In the courtyard of the Palace the storming of a Turkish fortress was represented with inimitable talent. A magnificent tournament followed, and this was succeeded by a sumptuous banquet; but after the guests had refreshed themselves they found that the courtyard of the Palace had been converted into a mimic sea, and a spirited naval combat ensued, and made the walls re-echo to its thunders."[1]

**Christine of Lorraine.**

Christine of Lorraine made Ferdinand an excellent wife. On the death of her mother she had been adopted by her grandmother, Catherine de' Medici, and entirely brought up by her,[2] and is described on her arrival at Florence as "full of grace, vivacity, and spirit." She survived her husband, Ferdinand I., for twenty-seven years, her son, Cosimo II., for sixteen years, and was appointed by the latter Regent of Tuscany during the long minority of his son, Ferdinand II. She was thus the leading social influence at Florence during the greater part of three reigns and for so long a period as fifty years. Though not possessed of much ability, she was a thoroughly good woman, and she completely reformed the court of Tuscany; henceforth no ground was given for the fabrica-

[1] Galluzzi. Lib. v. cap. i.

[2] For the dowry given her by Catherine de' Medici on her marriage, *see* chap. xxviii. p. 395.

tion of dark tales of crime such as that which the atmosphere of the court had afforded in the reigns of Cosimo I. and Francis I.; and this one important work done by Christine of Lorraine, and made permanent through the excellent bringing up which she gave her son Cosimo II., is sufficient to render her worthy of the utmost praise. One other thing Christine effected. For by showing herself all that she was in this respect, she did an important service to one who had loved her, whom she had loved, and to whom she owed all her training. For nothing could better vindicate the character of Catherine de' Medici than the results which her training produced in the granddaughter whom she had brought up. In the portrait of Christine in the Uffizi Gallery,[1] taken a year or two after her marriage, she wears her court dress and has her crown by her side; the crown is large and heavily jewelled, and has, below the Florentine lily, two figures supporting a shield; her dress is of a peculiar shape, the lower part of the sleeve being removable and fastened with large buttons to the upper part or cape; and this pattern of dress is to be seen in several other portraits of ladies of this time in the Uffizi Gallery. In another portrait of her, taken about the same time, she wears the same shaped dress, and the crown by her side is a small light one having on it only the Florentine lily. In the case of the Medici, not only each Grand Duke,[2] but each Grand Duchess also, was buried wearing her own crown, an entirely fresh one being made for her successor. In her portrait each Grand Duchess

[1] Plate LXXI. [2] *See* chap. xxiv. p. 300.

is painted with her crown by her side, always heavily jewelled, and each has a different one.

Ferdinand I. reigned over Tuscany for twenty-two years. The crest and motto which he chose on coming to the throne—a swarm of bees with the motto *Majestate tantum*,[1] by which he intended to signify that his rule should be just and temperate, enabling the people to gather wealth as bees do honey—was faithfully acted up to by him; and while his marriage restored order and morality to the court, his various reforms revived Tuscany from the state of mal-administration into which it had fallen under Francis. He had a profound veneration for all the acts and opinions of his father; but the bold spirit which he had shown as a cardinal did not continue to appear in his career as Grand Duke, and he often quailed before the Jesuits, which order, recognised by Pope Paul III. in 1543, had in only forty years gained entire domination over the Papacy. On beginning to reign Ferdinand pardoned all who had opposed him, and removed all restrictions as to where Florentines might reside. He put an end to the corruption which had invaded the courts of justice, assisted commerce by many wise fiscal reforms, and gave his entire attention to State affairs and measures for the welfare of the country. Among many other useful works with this object he successfully accomplished for the time[2] the draining of the Val di Chiana, which had been an engineering

[1] "By dignity alone" (not force, understood).

[2] It was not, however, until two hundred years later, under the Austrian Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo, that the great difficulties of this engineering problem were finally overcome.

CHRISTINE OF LORRAINE, WIFE OF FERDINAND I., AT TWENTY-FIVE.

*Brogi.* [*Uffizi Gallery.*

difficulty for generations; he brought under cultivation the plains of Pisa, Fucecchio, and the Val di Nievole; and he gave Pisa water communication with Leghorn, by means of the canal of the Naviglio, into which a portion of the water of the Arno was turned.

Founding of Leghorn.

But Ferdinand's greatest achievement was the creation of Leghorn; for it was he who practically created that port through the particular measure which made it so remarkable a success. His father Cosimo had begun the conversion of this small fishing village into an important harbour, but had not had time to proceed far with the project; the one good work of Francis had been the continuation of his father's plans in this respect, but though he advanced them to some extent, by far the greater part of the work still remained to be done when Ferdinand came to the throne. The latter took this matter up vigorously, and it became his chief interest; harbours were laid out and excavated, fortifications planned and thrown up, and sound fiscal regulations made to attract commerce to the new port. But these arrangements alone would not have amounted to more than had often been carried out in other cases without any startling results. To them, however, Ferdinand added a measure which in its broad-mindedness was entirely in advance of the ideas of his age. He published a decree (which from Leghorn's Italian name of Livorno he called the *Livornina*) by which it was ruled that in the new port there should be universal toleration, thus making it an asylum of

refuge for the persecuted of all religions and nationalities; Protestants flying from France and Spain, Roman Catholics flying from England, Flemings flying from Alva's atrocities in the Netherlands, persecuted Jews from all countries, were all alike welcomed and protected at Leghorn, and found a safe refuge there; while to the Jews Ferdinand gave also a special charter to protect them from persecution by Tuscans. The result of this broad-minded policy was that Leghorn went up with a bound, and before Ferdinand's reign of twenty-two years was ended had risen from an insignificant fishing village into the leading commercial port of Italy after Genoa. Montesquieu, speaking of this achievement, calls Leghorn "the masterpiece of the dynasty of the Medici." The latter could, however, point to greater achievements than this one (both before and after it), important as it was.

Ferdinand also largely increased the Tuscan navy, and the latter, led by the knights of Santo Stefano, gained much honour in the Mediterranean, both by victories over the Turks, and by sweeping from the seas the fierce pirates of Barbary who were a formidable obstacle to all maritime commerce. Towards the end of Ferdinand's reign the war-galleys of the knights of Santo Stefano were in 1607 sent to attack Bona, on the coast of Barbary, the headquarters of the corsairs; the place was fiercely defended by the latter, but the knights took it by an assault in which they displayed unexampled bravery. In the following year the same galleys achieved a still more brilliant victory over the Turks, attacking and completely defeating the much stronger Turkish

fleet, capturing nine of their vessels, seven hundred prisoners, and a store of jewels valued at 2,000,000 ducats. This victory was the final success which closed a long series of similar contests, and placed the Tuscan fleet at the head of naval affairs in the Mediterranean. In the Sala del Baroccio in the Uffizi Gallery is to be seen a table of Florentine *pietra dura*, executed for Ferdinand, in the centre of which is a representation of the harbour of Leghorn, with vessels of all nations floating on a sea of *lapis-lazuli*, and among them a squadron of six galleys of the Tuscan fleet bringing into the harbour two captured Turkish ships.

In his foreign policy Ferdinand continued to increase those close relations with France which he had begun by his marriage. Six months after Christine of Lorraine left Blois Henry III. was assassinated, and there followed four years of war in France, during which Henry of Navarre (Henry IV.) was contending for his kingdom against the League, which was assisted by Spain. Ferdinand supported his claims and provided him with money, undeterred by the opposition of Spain and the League, who were appalled at the prospect of a Protestant succeeding to the throne of France, and were determined to prevent it at all costs. And it was practically Ferdinand who at length placed Henry IV. on the French throne. The revenue of the Grand Duke of Tuscany was at this period equal to, if not greater than, the entire revenue of France; and the sums which Ferdinand lent Henry to enable him to continue the contest were enormous. Great trains of

waggons containing specie, and escorted by large bodies of cavalry and infantry, were continually being sent from Florence to Henry in France. After a four years' struggle, seeing that Henry would never gain that throne as a Protestant, Ferdinand urged him to accept the Roman Catholic faith; he smoothed matters over for him with the Pope, and eventually Henry in 1593 renounced Protestantism, was through Ferdinand's strenuous endeavours acknowledged as King by Pope Clement VIII.,[1] and in March 1594 at last gained possession of Paris. This was followed in 1598 by the death of Philip II. of Spain, which had the effect of still further cementing Ferdinand's close friendship with France; and in the following year the latter was able to arrange a marriage which bound Henry IV. still closer to him.

Marie de Medici (1).

Ferdinand's niece Maria, Francis's second surviving daughter, had been a girl of fourteen when her father and stepmother died and her uncle succeeded to the throne. She was given a home by the latter, and was now twenty-six, the same age as the Grand Duchess Christine; while for one cause or another various proposals for her marriage had one after another fallen through. At length, however, upon Henry IV. and Marguerite of Valois being divorced by mutual consent, Ferdinand succeeded in arranging that Maria should be married to Henry IV. The marriage which thus placed a Medici for the second time

[1] Pope Sixtus V. died in 1590. He was followed in rapid succession by Urban VII. (1590), Gregory XIV. (1590-1591), Innocent IX. (1591-1592), and Clement VIII. (1592-1605).

on the throne of France was performed by proxy in Florence in October 1600; and a few days afterwards Maria set out on her journey, the Grand Duchess accompanying her as far as Marseilles. She had an immense dowry; great as that of Catherine de' Medici had been, Maria's was even greater; and Sully said that no former Queen had ever brought to France such a marriage portion. As Queen of France, Maria (or, as she was always called in France, Marie de Medici) proved herself a decided contrast to her predecessor. Her blonde hair and creamy-white complexion—that beauty which inspired Rubens—at first charmed Henry IV. until he found out how devoid she was of brains. She was good-natured, and was a moral woman in a most immoral time, but, unlike most of her family, she was entirely wanting in humour, wit, or intelligence, being in this respect remarkably inferior to her sister Eleonora, Duchess of Mantua. Henry IV. gave her every inducement to show all her worst points. His infidelities were numerous, and Marie was not inclined to pass these over without resentment. Henry looked on the matter in another light; he wrote to Sully, "Our little disagreements ought never to outlast twenty-four hours," and complained of Marie that when she was offended she "took five days over it." She also objected to his illegitimate children being educated with the Princes and Princesses, and to being forced by Henry to address one of the former as "my son." Under these conditions the court of France became a scene of constant dissensions; the quarrels, rivalries, and battles-royal which disturbed the palace were incessant, and

Henry's great Minister, the Duke of Sully, was constantly called away from affairs of State to pacify the storms in the royal household. Right was entirely on Marie's side, but she did not adopt the best means of fighting her battle. Once in Sully's presence her wrath was so great that she was about to strike the King, when the Minister was only just in time to dash her hand aside. "Madame," he cried, "are you mad? Do you not know he could have your head off in half an hour?" But Marie's quality of good-nature was of value to her. Richelieu writes:—

"A storm was scarcely over before the King, delighting in the fine weather, treated the Queen with such sweetness that since that great Prince's death I have often heard her rejoice over the memory of her life with him."

In Marie's portrait in the Uffizi Gallery,[1] painted not long after her marriage, her dress is very magnificent. Marie de Medici spent more on dress than probably any other lady who ever lived. The descriptions of the contents of her wardrobe, and of the numerous garments of richest material from among which she daily selected what dress she would wear, fill pages in the accounts of her life. Among them all she had three special favourites, "a dress of cloth of gold on a ground of columbine, a dress of gold and silver embroidery, and a dress of blue velvet sewn with gold *fleur-de-lys*"; and it is the latter which she wears in this picture. The stomacher is of ermine, covered with groups of large pearls and amethysts, each group of four pearls having an

[1] Plate LXXII.

amethyst in the centre, while in front she wears a large cross of amethysts from which hang three very large pearls. The sleeves are similarly covered with groups of pearls and amethysts; while the skirt is heavily embroidered with *fleur-de-lys* in gold. Her crown is also encrusted with amethysts and pearls.[1]

The "Gallery of the Statues."

Ferdinand I. was no less active in the cause of Art than in that of the development of the country, the perfecting of the navy, and the founding of Leghorn. From the Villa Medici at Rome he gradually conveyed to Florence a great part of the works of Greek and Roman sculpture which he had collected there, and placed them in the new rooms over the public offices, the Uffizi; though some of the chief of the works collected by him at Rome (including the *Venus*, and the *Wrestlers*) were not brought to Florence until seventy years after his death, by Cosimo III., and the *Niobe* group and the *Apollino* not until a hundred years later still.[2] To accommodate the various works of sculpture which he was bringing from Rome, Ferdinand commissioned Buontalenti to construct several additional rooms to this gallery, including in particular the beautiful one called the Tribuna, with its ceiling of mother-of-pearl set in gilded gesso, walls lined throughout with hangings of *moiré antique*, and pavement inlaid with coloured

[1] Henry IV.'s portrait is also to be seen in the Uffizi Gallery, his robes being embroidered in the same manner as his wife's dress, with *fleur-de-lys* in gold.

[2] *See* chap. xxix. p. 468 (footnote).

marbles. Thus the Uffizi Gallery was for a long period more noted for its sculpture than for its pictures, and on this account was, down to quite recent times, called "the Gallery of the Statues." At the same time Ferdinand continued the course which Francis had begun of collecting in these rooms any additional pictures which he acquired. We have an example of the vicissitudes which many of the pictures now in the Uffizi Gallery have undergone before at last finding a resting-place there, from the history of Botticelli's beautiful little picture of *Judith.* Painted for Piero il Gottoso, it originally formed part of the artistic treasures of the Medici Palace. Robbed with their other possessions when the palace was sacked in 1494 it disappeared for ninety years, during which time it apparently passed from hand to hand, until it at last came into the possession of Ridolfo Singatti, who gave it as a present to Francis's wife, Bianca Capello, and so it came once more into the possession of the Medici, and after Bianca's death was placed by Ferdinand in the Uffizi collection. Still more extraordinary have been the vicissitudes of one of the greatest treasures of the Pitti Gallery, Raphael's *Madonna del Gran Duca.* For this picture, painted by him in 1505, and now the most highly valued of all Raphael's pictures in Florence, had in the course of two hundred years dropped out of sight, and passing from hand to hand at last came into the possession of a poor widow who esteemed it of so little value that she sold it to a picture dealer for *twelve crowns.*

PLATE LXXII.

MARIA DE' MEDICI, DAUGHTER OF FRANCIS I., AND QUEEN OF FRANCE (MARIE DE MEDICI).
*Alinari*] [*Uffizi Gallery.*

COSIMO, SON OF FERDINAND I., AT AGE OF TWELVE
By Sustermans.

*Brogi*] [*Villa of Poggio a Caiano.*

The Medici Mausoleum.

But the most important work inaugurated in Florence by Ferdinand I., and begun by him in 1604,[1] was the great family mausoleum, attached to the church of San Lorenzo. The site chosen was immediately behind, and adjoining, the choir of the church, from the back of which a door opens directly into the mausoleum; but this entrance has long been kept closed.

The laying of the foundation-stone of this great work was an impressive ceremony, and is thus described in the diary of Francesco Settimanni, a Florentine citizen of the time:—

"On the 6th April 1604 His Most Serene Highness the Grand Duke, having chosen the place alongside the church of San Lorenzo where he proposed to erect a splendid chapel, at the hour of half-past two on Good Friday, the day of the most holy Passion of our Saviour, came to the place accompanied by the whole court. He gave to the Prince Cosimo,[2] his eldest son, a gold spade for the purpose, with which the latter, digging the site where the foundations were to be laid, dug out a portion of the earth, and with his own hands loaded a small gold basket with it, and then raising this earth began the work of the foundations. This being finished, the Grand Duke concluded the ceremony by saying in a loud voice, '*Here shall be our end.*'"[3]

One wonders how far Ferdinand I., standing in the corner of the Piazza Madonna in the space allotted to the new building, surrounded by his numerous sons and daughters and his magnificent

[1] The year after the death of Queen Elizabeth in England.
[2] Plate LXXIII.
[3] *Diario del Settimanni*, State Archives, Florence.

court, in making the speech with which he concluded the laying of the foundation-stone of the great mausoleum, looked forward into the future, as he evidently did look back into the past. He certainly little imagined that the long roll of family tombs, lying some in the Old Sacristy, some in the New Sacristy, and some in the mausoleum which he was founding, would end four generations later with a tomb laid where he stood over one who was the last solitary descendant of the family.

The construction of this huge work, which was intended to be as splendid as size and the decoration of the interior with a profusion of precious stones could make it, occupied more than a hundred years, and called forth various descriptions of art work in Florence, originating in particular one important industry which still flourishes.[1] Begun by Ferdinand I., the construction of this mausoleum continued during the whole of the reigns of his four successors, not being really finished[2] until after the death of the last of them. The design of the building as we now see it completed is an immense octagonal chapel surmounted by a dome, the interior of the walls covered with rich marbles, and round the chapel the sarcophagi of the seven Medici Grand Dukes,[3] each sarcophagus being of highly polished Oriental granite (of the same fine workmanship as the inlay work on the walls), and in a niche over each sarcophagus a colossal statue

[1] *See* pp. 358-359.

[2] Or, more correctly speaking, practically finished; for work on it even still continues (*see* chap. xxxi. pp. 509-510).

[3] Plate CI. The tomb of the last Medici Grand Duke, Gian Gastone, is still wanting. In four cases the empty niche still awaits its statue.

in bronze of the individual Grand Duke, standing, clad in his robes of state, with crown and sceptre; and on each sarcophagus a jewelled cushion in Oriental granite, with upon this a gilded and jewelled crown.[1] Large slabs of porphyry below each monument bear the name and titles of the Grand Duke to whom it refers. The walls are lined throughout with inlaid marbles, *lapis-lazuli*, and other precious stones, "the richest crust of ornament that ever was lavished on so large a surface,"[2] and the inlay work is of an improved description introduced specially for the decoration of this mausoleum. It was intended that the dome should be entirely lined with Persian *lapis-lazuli* (divided into *cassetone*), which would have been in unison with the tone and material of the walls; but after the last Medici died this was given up on account of the cost,[3] and the dome was simply painted with frescoes. Round the lower part of the walls are the coats-of-arms of the various territories ruled over by the Medici, and one after another incorporated in Tuscany. There are sixteen coats-of-arms representing these various territories, viz.: — Florence, Fiesole, Arezzo, Cortona, Pistoia, Pisa, Borgo San Sepolcro, Volterra, Siena, Monte Pulciano, Montalcino, Grosseto, Massa, Pienza, Chiusi, Svania. These coats-of-arms are executed in *lapis-lazuli*, mother-of-pearl, jasper, agate, chalcedony, and other precious stones, and are

[1] The jewelled cushion on the tomb of Cosimo II., which cost 70,000 francs (£2,800), was stolen about twenty-five years ago (*see* Plate CIII.). An imitation of it has been placed on the tomb in the present year, since this photograph was taken.

[2] Forsyth.

[3] But *see* chap. xxxi. pp. 509-510.

of the very finest quality of *intarsiatura*[1] work known. The whole building is estimated to have cost about £1,000,000 sterling.

It is the fashion to decry the mausoleum, and to compare it with the New Sacristy, calling the latter an abode of art and the former an example of mere tasteless magnificence. But this is a short-sighted view and displays ignorance of the conditions. In this work Ferdinand I. carried out the traditions of his family by helping forward the artistic talents of the Florentines of his time. Those talents, on the decay in Painting and Sculpture, now ran in the direction of the minor arts, and particularly of inlay work in stone; and it was only in that direction that assistance to the artistic talents of the Florentines could at this time be afforded. And had the interior decoration of the dome been completed in accordance with the original design, instead of being covered with highly-coloured and inharmonious frescoes, the merits of the building would have been better appreciated. In any case it remains a remarkable memorial of the Medici and of the grandeur of their conceptions; while it gave a valuable impetus to every branch of those arts which deal with work in marble and precious stones.

The Royal Manufactory of Pietra Dura.

This work called for a degree of excellence in the art of *pietra dura* (or Florentine mosaic) far in advance of anything which had previously been

[1] *Intarsiatura*, *intarsia*, or *intarsio* properly means any inlay work. While generally applied to works executed in wood, it is also used technically in regard to inlay work in stone.

attempted. Ferdinand had already prepared for this by founding the "Royal Manufactory of Pietra Dura";[1] and this manufactory was now set to work to execute all the inlay work required for the new mausoleum when the walls should be ready to receive it, thus originating that *pietra dura* industry which has since become one of the most prominent minor arts of Florence.[2]

Music.

The great change which had taken place in the fifteenth century in regard to architecture, sculpture, and painting was now to be followed by a similar renaissance in a fourth art—music. And Florence was again to lead the way. It is to Florence, and to the encouragement given to this new departure in music by Ferdinand I., that lovers of music owe the opera. Music in this new movement followed exactly the same course which had been taken by the other arts two centuries earlier, Renaissance thought being always a resurrection of classical ideas, but in a new and original dress. Towards the beginning of Ferdinand's reign a few earnest lovers of music, dissatisfied with the older form of music, formed themselves into a society with a view to bring about a reform on the lines of what they believed to have been the method of the Greeks in their dramas. The object which this

[1] This still exists. On the staircase is a bust of its founder, Ferdinand I.

[2] In the Gem Room of the Uffizi Gallery are to be seen various costly articles of this *pietra dura* work, in jasper, amethyst, lapis-lazuli, and topaz, inlaid with diamonds, rubies, and pearls, which were all made for the altar of the mausoleum when it should be set up.

society aimed at was to see whether, instead of musical interludes being here and there introduced into dramas, as was then the custom, it was not possible to combine drama and music together, making the latter an integral part of the former, the drama being sung continuously from beginning to end, in the same manner as the Greeks had done; and at the same time to arrive at a style of music which should interpret the drama performed, music and drama being thus wedded together. This society numbered among its leading members a Bardi, a Corsi, and a Strozzi, names which had long been celebrated in Florence; also Jacopo Peri, Emilio Cavalieri, Vincenzio Galileo, the poet Ottavio Rinuccini, and others, and held its earliest meetings in the Bardi palace in the Via de' Bardi. Thinking of all the enchanting scenic effects and musical beauty of the modern opera, it is strange to realise that its birthplace was this dark and grim old palace in one of the narrowest streets of Florence.

After many efforts the first continuous musical drama was produced, the opera *Daphne*, the music being by Jacopo Corsi and Jacopo Peri, and the words by the poet Ottavio Rinuccini. It was performed for the first time in 1597, in the great hall of the Uffizi (that now occupied by the State Archives), in the presence of Ferdinand I. and his whole court. As a result various improvements were introduced, and the second opera, *Euridice*, being the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, the music by Peri and the words by Rinuccini, was performed for the first time in the same hall and before the same audience, in 1600, at the marriage festivities

in Florence of Marie de' Medici.[1] Other operas followed, and the work of the reformers was finally crowned by Monteverde in his opera *Ariadne*, produced at Mantua in 1607, and his opera *Orfeo*, produced in 1608 (the words of both operas again being by Rinuccini), an achievement which completed the revolution in musical drama, and which causes Monteverde to take the same place at the beginning of the seventeenth century which was 250 years later taken by Wagner.

In January 1600 a great storm threw down the huge bronze ball and cross crowning the cathedral, made and placed in position with much difficulty by Verrocchio in 1471. In falling they did much damage to the roof of the cathedral, while the ball rolled some distance down the Via de' Servi. Ferdinand had a new ball and cross made, considerably larger than Verrocchio's, and these, which now crown the cathedral, were placed in position in 1602, and have stood the storms of three centuries.

Ferdinand also completed the fortress of San Giorgio which Cosimo had begun, and called it the fortress of the Belvedere, from the beautiful panorama to be seen thence. He made Buontalenti, its architect, construct in it a subterranean chamber, for which Buontalenti invented a secret lock only able to be opened by himself and the Grand Duke; and here the Medici treasure was henceforth always kept. The amount of Ferdinand's treasure was very great; it is recorded in a contemporary diary that he showed

[1] In these operas the Florentines also invented the methods of scoring, barring, and figuring in the writing of operatic music which have ever since been adopted.

to Bernardo Buonarmoti, to whom he gave it in charge, no less than five millions in coined gold, seven thousand Spanish dollars, and an immense mass of jewels.[1]

To the Medici villas of Careggi, Cafaggiolo, Poggio a Caiano, and Castello, which had seen so many generations of the family, Ferdinand now added another, the villa of Petraia,[2] which he purchased from the Salutati family. He completely restored this villa, and had its beautiful central court decorated by Volteranno and other artists with frescoes representing the coronation of Charles V. by Clement VII., the entry of Cosimo I. into Siena, the institution of the Order of Santo Stefano, and other episodes in the history of the family.

Ferdinand also caused the fine equestrian statue of his father, Cosimo I., to be executed by Gian de Bologna, and set it up in the Piazza della Signoria. It has on the pedestal bronze bas-reliefs representing the three most important episodes of Cosimo's career: (i) his being given the rule of the State by the Council of the Forty-eight; (ii) his triumphal entry into Siena on its conquest and incorporation with Tuscany; and (iii) his being given the rank of Grand Duke by Pius V.

Having completed and set up the statue of his father, Ferdinand then set Gian da Bologna to work upon a similar equestrian statue of himself, that which stands in the Piazza S. S. Annunziata. This statue has considerable interest, not only

[1] *Ordine e Descendenza de' Medici*, State Archives, Florence.
[2] Now a royal villa of the King of Italy.

from being that rendered celebrated by Robert Browning's poem of *The Statue and the Bust*, but also on other grounds. It is made from the bronze guns captured from the Turks in the naval victories gained by Ferdinand's fleet, and bears on the pedestal his private crest, the swarm of bees and motto "*Majestate tantum.*" The horse very nearly found its way to Paris, and was the origin of a celebrated statue in that city. In 1605 Marie de' Medici was anxious to present to Paris an equestrian statue of her husband, Henry IV., to be set up on the open ground between the two sections of the Pont-Neuf. As there was no sculptor in France capable of such a work, she wrote to her uncle, Ferdinand I., asking that he would allow Gian da Bologna to execute it. And with this request she coupled another. As Gian da Bologna was eighty-one, and the work would take a long time, she asked her uncle to give her the bronze horse which was then ready to receive his own statue, and to let another be made for himself. But Ferdinand declined to accede to this cool request, being quite as much alive as Marie was to the probability that Gian da Bologna might not live to complete another bronze horse. He, however, suggested that the moulds used for casting his horse might be made use of for that which Marie desired. This was done; though owing to Gian da Bologna's death it was nine years before the statue (including both the horse and the figure of Henry IV.[1]) was completed. Its transport, by

[1] Both Ferdinand's own statue in Florence and that of Henry IV. in Paris were completed by Gian da Bologna's pupil, Pietro Tacca.

sea from Leghorn to Havre and thence to Paris, was difficult, but after being dropped overboard near Havre and recovered from the bottom of the sea, the statue reached Paris and was in 1614 set up on the Pont-Neuf, to Marie's great delight. Inside the horse (which was a facsimile of that which bears Ferdinand's statue) was placed an inscription on vellum stating that Ferdinand, Grand Duke of Tuscany, had ordered the statue to be executed by Gian da Bologna, and had it finished by Pietro Tacca in affectionate memory of Henry IV.

For Francis I. Gian da Bologna had executed a statue celebrated all over the world. For Ferdinand I. he executed one as little known as the other is well known, viz., his *Genius of the Medici*,[1] represented by a handsome boy holding aloft in one hand one of the Medici balls, and clasping under the other arm a small goat signifying Capricorn, the sign of the zodiac under which Cosimo I. was born. While that sculptor's *Mercury*, as Perkins says, "has winged its way to the museums and houses of every quarter of the globe," this other fine specimen of Gian da Bologna's art, and one so interesting in its connection with the Medici, has hitherto been practically unknown. It is owing to the diligent care for the records of the past evinced by Signor Cornish, Director of the Pitti Palace, that this beautiful statue has been brought to light,[2] having hitherto been hidden away uncared for in a back courtyard of the palace.

In 1605 Pope Clement VIII. died, and was succeeded by Leo XI. (Alessandro de' Medici).

[1] *See* page 372.

[2] *See* chap. xxviii. p. 418.

He did not belong to this family, not being a descendant of Giovanni di Bicci. He was, however, a distant connection, being descended from a brother of the grandfather of Giovanni di Bicci. He was only Pope for a month, when he died and was succeeded by Paul V. (1605-1621).

Ferdinand and Christine had eight children: Cosimo, who succeeded his father, Francesco, Carlo, Lorenzo, Eleonora, Caterina, Maddalena, and Claudia. They were all quite young at the time of their father's death, Cosimo, the eldest, being nineteen, and Claudia, the youngest, only five years old.

The last six months of Ferdinand's life were chiefly occupied with arrangements for the marriage of his eldest son. Ferdinand arranged that he should be married to the Archduchess Maria Maddalena, daughter of the Archduke Charles of Austria. It was a very exalted marriage, Maria Maddalena's sister Margaret being already married to Philip III. of Spain, while her brother Ferdinand soon afterwards became the Emperor Ferdinand II. The Archduchess came to Florence, and she and Cosimo were married in San Lorenzo in June 1608 with most magnificent ceremonies. On her arrival part of the walls of Florence were thrown down and a new gateway opened in them for her to enter at; and on entering she received the crown of Tuscany from Ferdinand himself, while "the city blazed with magnificence."

This auspicious event closed Ferdinand's life; he died on the 7th February 1609 at the age of sixty, leaving the affairs of the family in a most

prosperous condition, his eldest son just married to the sister of one soon to be the Emperor, seven other children growing up, and an enormous treasure safely stored in the fortress of the Belvedere. He was buried with all the pomp which Florence learned to associate with the funeral of its Grand Duke, being interred in the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo pending the completion of the mausoleum which he had inaugurated, and to which his remains were eventually removed.[1] In the crypt of that mausoleum there has recently been placed an interesting memorial of his principal achievement. On the 3rd March 1906, being the tercentenary of the founding of Leghorn, the Antiquarian Society of that city visited the mausoleum, and, after an impressive oration by the President of the Society conveying the gratitude which Leghorn felt to the energy and ability of its founder, Ferdinand I., hung a handsome bronze wreath on the wall over his tombstone inscribed with the above date. So that Leghorn still cherishes with gratitude the memory of the Medici.

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With Ferdinand I. a notable change begins in connection with a feeling which had greatly affected the career of this family in the past, and was to have still greater effects in regard to them after that career had ended.

[1] When in 1857 Ferdinand's coffin was opened the body was found clothed in a black doublet ornamented with stripes of velvet and satin, with over this the robes of the Grand Master of the Order of Santo Stefano. There were also two handsome gold medallions, one of them bearing his likeness and name, with, on the reverse, the cross of Santo Stefano, and the other also bearing his likeness and name, with, on the reverse, his emblem and motto. The fine bronze statue over his monument in the mausoleum (Plate CII.) is by Pietro Tacca.

Writers on their history belonging to other countries have universally found an insoluble problem in the fact that even after the Medici have long since become extinct a virulent animosity against them should still continue to exist, and that they should be under a cloud in the city which they made so great. It was felt that political antipathies, however strong, did not suffice to account for such a result; since these could scarcely continue in sufficient strength to have such an effect after the entire conditions which called them forth had for many generations passed away. It is, however, in another direction that the solution to this problem lies.

The Florentines, with all their many admirable qualities, possess one characteristic which is the real cause of this phenomenon. This is, a power of jealousy in degree almost inconceivable to those of northern race—a characteristic which is to be seen in operation throughout all Florentine history. This it was which in reality created the fierce internecine contests which time after time rent Florence during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; this it was which in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries brought upon the Medici the violent attacks which they experienced eight times in succession during one hundred and fifty years;[1] and this again it is which has caused that strange fact which has puzzled so many writers.

The poorer classes felt a fondness for the Medici family throughout their history, and had ample reason for doing so; while even to the

[1] From the time of Cosimo Pater Patriae to that of Francis I., viz., in 1433, 1466, 1470, 1478, 1494, 1527, 1537, and 1575, including three banishments of the family.

present day they have a regard for their memory. But it was far otherwise with all those Florentine families who had originally been on a par with the Medici, but had in course of time been surpassed by them. That result was due to the effects of intellectual gifts so unusual that none need have felt moved by resentment at it; but nevertheless the families thus surpassed did feel the bitterest resentment, and made no attempt to hide the fact.

Nor was this all. When a despotic monarchy is succeeded by a republic there is only one family embittered by the loss of former greatness. But when a republic is succeeded by a despotic monarchy there are created an hundred such families; and these also the most influential in the State. Since the Christian era the former case has occurred often in history; but the latter case has only occurred twice—in the case of Rome, and in that of Florence. But whereas Augustus[1] carefully avoided all appearance of despotism, and whereas the notable Roman families were not ousted from public affairs, the course taken by Cosimo I., though perhaps forced on him by circumstances, was the exact opposite of that pursued by Augustus. We have seen how he took every opportunity of showing that he wielded the sole power, how he ruled without any Council, and how he invariably chose men who were not Florentines as his secretaries. Not a single one of the old Florentine families, whose members had for centuries held the highest offices in the State, including frequently that of Gonfaloniere, saw any one of its members employed by Cosimo

[1] B.C. 28 to A.D. 14.

even as a secretary. It may be imagined what fierce wrath such a state of things created; wrath which, though it dared not show itself, was all the more carefully nourished by those concerned. The taking away of a "liberty" which had never resulted in anything but internecine strife might in time have been forgiven; but the deprivation of all the power and importance to which the leading Florentine families had for generations been accustomed could never be forgiven; it was a rankling sore which could never be healed. The Medici, like other families, were not faultless; but even had they been angels the embittered feelings (so widely shared) consequent on the bare fact of a republic being succeeded by a despotic monarchy, were alone sufficient to produce all the charges which have been made against them.

When, therefore, overt attacks had no longer a chance of success, the Medici having become crowned heads supported by Emperors and Popes, these other families, while outwardly acquiescing in that which they felt powerless to reverse, nourished, from generation to generation, an intense jealousy at the height to which this family had attained, and vented that jealousy, no longer in overt attacks, but in the secret fabrication of stories of crime to cast disgrace upon the Medici.

It is here that there originated, from the time of Ferdinand I. onwards, those various stories of this nature which have "passed for history," and which, eagerly caught up by the sensation-lovers of all ages and countries, have had so large a part in forming the general idea entertained of the Medici, that atmosphere of the dagger and the

bowl by which melodrama loves to surround them. In this manner, years after he was dead,[1] were fabricated against Cosimo I. the stories that he had poisoned his own daughter and killed with his own hands one of his sons; and against his sons the stories that two of them had killed each other, that another had ordered the murder of his sister-in-law, that a fourth had murdered his wife, and that a fifth had poisoned his brother and instigated the murder of his sister.[2] Thus envenomed jealousy contrived to accuse every one of Cosimo's five sons of the murder of a brother, a sister, or a wife.[3] Even, however, were all these stories true it would still be the case, as has once before been remarked, that to not many among the ruling families of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries have so few crimes of murder been attributed as to the thirteen generations of the Medici.[4] Therefore it is not owing to an unusual excess of crime that the character generally

[1] It is not generally realised that these stories were not rumours which obtained at the time that these deaths occurred, but stories which made their first appearance long afterwards (in some cases as much as a hundred years or more afterwards), and in every case from a doubtful source.

[2] It will scarcely be believed (in view of the circumstances under which the murder in question occurred, and of Ferdinand's undoubted character), but it is a fact that those interested in fabricating stories of crime against Cosimo's house declared in after years that the murder of Isabella by her husband Orsini had been instigated by her brother Ferdinand and was carried out with the full concurrence of her brother Francis.

[3] The late Signor G. E. Saltini, in his *Tragidie Medicee* (1898), has taken in turn each of these stories against Cosimo I. and his sons, and (assisted by the almost unique knowledge of the archives of Tuscany which he possessed) has subjected each of these stories to a searching analysis, with the result that the whole are shown to be entirely false. Such a testimony from such a source is conclusive. Though even without it the fact would be certain, on the grounds which have already been mentioned.

[4] In the foregoing chapters every case attributed to them has been mentioned; so that the above statement can easily be verified.

imputed to them has gained its prevalence. This demonstrates the source where its true origin is to be found.

And when at length the Medici passed away this long-standing jealousy bore fruit in a never-ending vilification of their name, in accusations of their having taken away a "liberty" asserted to have existed before they arose, in the repetition of these legends against them, and in endeavours in all possible ways to obliterate their memory.[1] The Medici, attacked by the sword in their earlier career, were attacked still more virulently by the pen when they were no more, and when there remained no one to defend their memory. Such were the results of the ordinary course of history being reversed by a despotic monarchy succeeding a republic, instead of the opposite case.

Since the publication of *The Cambridge Modern History* it is no longer possible for any one pretending to a knowledge of history to treat these tales of abnormal crimes except as stories finally condemned as entirely without foundation. But they show how great was the jealousy of the other principal families of Florence against the one of their number which had surpassed them, a jealousy which, never laid aside, appeared to grow even

[1] Prominent instances are, the first palace built by them given the name of the Riccardi Palace, the second palace built by them given the name of the Pitti Palace, the important library collected by them given the name of the Laurentian Library, the great galleries of art collected by them, and given by them to the nation, called only the Uffizi or the Pitti Galleries, and with no sign of their name upon doors or walls, the tomb of the great Lorenzo the Magnificent (the most prominent Florentine in Europe) left without even a tombstone, with other similar instances. There is not a single palace, art gallery, or public building called by their name. And it would be quite possible for a foreign visitor to see all the sights of Florence without ever knowing that the Medici had anything to do with any one of them.

stronger after the grave had closed over the last member of the family concerned. Now, however, that a better day has dawned it is time that these methods of a bygone age should be repudiated. The methods themselves have, one may well believe, been abandoned; but their effects still live, and will continue to do so as long as stories of this nature against the Medici, though condemned by history as false, are still repeated by a generation which would not itself stoop to invent them, and by whom such methods cannot but be utterly despised.

Statue of *The Genius of the Medici,* by Gian da Bologna, executed for Ferdinand I.

# CHAPTER XXVII

## COSIMO II.

*Born* 1590. (*Reigned* 1609-1620.) *Died* 1620.

Cosimo II., the eldest of the eight children of Ferdinand I. and Christine of Lorraine, succeeded his father as Grand Duke at the age of nineteen. The good disposition which he inherited from his mother, combined with the excellent training which from his childhood he had received, made him a most agreeable character, and his tolerance, dislike of quarrels and oppression, friendly temperament, and social tastes, caused him to be universally liked. In these respects he was fully seconded by his wife, Maria Maddalena; and under this young and agreeable pair, the court gained an attractiveness it had never had before. Sustermans was now the leading portrait-painter of the time, and his fine portraits of Cosimo and Maria Maddalena[1] in the Corsini Gallery, Florence, enable us to realise the appearance of this young couple at the time that Cosimo began his reign.

With Cosimo II. the life of this family seems

[1] Plates LXXIV. and LXXV. Cosimo's portrait shows him wearing the cloak of the Grand Master of the Order of Santo Stefano, and round his neck a handsome chain bearing the cross of that Order. Maria Maddalena wears a very gorgeous dress, ornamented with a striking design in heavy gold embroidery, and a lace collar of a different shape from the large "Medici" collar hitherto in vogue.

to enter on a new phase, one in which, during his time, youth, brightness, gaiety, and vivacity, joined to cultured tastes, a free expenditure of great wealth, and warm interest in amazing scientific discoveries were the prevailing features. While he himself was nineteen, his wife Maria Maddalena was the same age as his eldest sister Eleonora, namely eighteen, his sister Caterina was sixteen, his brother Francesco fifteen, and his brother Carlo fourteen;[1] all of them were cultured, accomplished, and abounding with youthful spirits; and this band of young people, gathering others of their own age about them, made the palace, with their constant entertainments, lightheartedness, and genial sociability, in a short time full of life and animation. It is a pleasant view that we have of these sons and daughters of Ferdinand I. Cosimo himself, with his brothers Francesco, Carlo, and Lorenzo, all showed in their lives both good qualities of character and good abilities. Again, in regard to their sisters Eleonora, Caterina, Maddalena, and Claudia, we hear in no case of any of those scandals which had disgraced the former generation; and while Eleonora and Maddalena had no opportunity of distinguishing themselves, Caterina and Claudia both showed in their respective spheres the good qualities and high abilities they possessed.[2]

The Pitti Palace (2).

One effect of these new conditions was that Cosimo now determined that the Grand Ducal palace must be much enlarged

[1] The twins, Lorenzo and Maddalena, were nine, while their little sister Claudia was five.

[2] Pages 387 and 397.

COSIMO II.
By Sustermans.

*Alinari*] [*Corsini Gallery, Florence.*

MARIA MADDALENA OF AUSTRIA, WIFE OF COSIMO II.
By Sustermans.

*Alinari]* *[Corsini Gallery, Florence.*

and improved in appearance. He accordingly set about extending it to three times its former size, by increasing the length of the façade from seven windows to thirteen, and erecting two great wings (three stories high) at right angles to the back of the building,[1] enclosing a large central courtyard, with a terrace at the back of the latter on a level with the rooms on the first floor.[2] The work was rapidly carried out, all the necessary stone being quarried on the site itself, the solid rock on which the palace stands having to be cut away in order to get sufficient level space for the wings added at the back of it. This great enlargement of the building, together with the costly additions which Cosimo at the same time made to the furniture and interior decoration, made the Grand Ducal palace a much more splendid abode than it hitherto had been.

Not content with this Cosimo also built for his wife, Maria Maddalena, the palatial villa of Poggio Imperiale (called so in honour of her with reference to her Imperial descent), on a site which she particularly admired on the slope of the hill leading down from Arcetri, outside the southern environs of the city; to which villa he made the truly royal road, nearly a mile in length and bordered on each side with a strip of garden and a double avenue of splendid cypress trees, which ascends to it from the Porta Romana. The building has for many years been given by the

[1] *See* Plate LXXIX. (p. 387); and plan, Appendix XIV.

[2] On the terrace the beautiful fountain (with marble Cupids in graceful attitudes on its edge), though it is a part of the extension of the palace by Cosimo II., was designed by Ammanati, Cosimo I.'s architect. The sound of its water has a delicious effect in the cool and shady courtyard below the terrace.

King of Italy as a Government College for young ladies, but the reception rooms are kept much as they were formerly, and these show various reminiscences of the time when this was the favourite residence of Cosimo and Maria Maddalena.[1] Each of these later generations of the family had their favourite villa, which thus becomes specially associated with them. With Cosimo I. it had been Castello; with Francis I., Poggio a Caiano; with Ferdinand I., Petraia; but Poggio Imperiale had a longer period of favour, being not only the favourite villa of Cosimo II. and Maria Maddalena, but also of Ferdinand II. and his generation of the family. Moreover one important fact connected with it makes it one of the most interesting buildings of Florence.[2]

Galileo (1).

But Cosimo II. was occupied with other matters more important to the world than the enlargement of the Grand Ducal palace, the construction of the villa of Poggio Imperiale, and social entertainments. His reign began the demonstration of a fact not always sufficiently realised, viz., that Florence did not only lead the world in Learning and Art, but in Science also; a fact still further demonstrated in the reign of his son, Ferdinand II.[3] This fresh addition to Florence's laurels was begun by a step taken by Cosimo as soon as he came to the throne

[1] The walls are adorned with numerous frescoes, one of which shows the open space in front of the building as it was in Cosimo's time, and another gives a picture of the Medici villa of Cafaggiolo in the Mugello. Some of the rooms still contain portraits of various members of the Medici family.

[2] *See* p. 379.

[3] Chap xxviii. pp. 436-439.

which proved the most important act of his reign, signalising it even more than that of his father had been signalised by the creation of Leghorn, and bringing lasting renown to Florence, as well as to his own name. This was his act of inviting back, protecting from persecution, and establishing in honour in his own country, the great Galileo, who had eighteen years before been compelled by jealous animosity to leave it. Galileo Galilei, born in 1564 at Pisa, had at the early age of twenty-three been appointed Professor of Mathematics at the University of Pisa. And it was there that he made his first great discovery, that which resulted in his invention of the pendulum. The late Signor Vincenzo Antinori, Director of the Scientific Museum of Florence, in his notice of Galileo, says:—

"The pendulum, as is already known, was the result of the first observations of our philosopher in Pisa; it was the spark which kindled his genius, the instrument by which he tested the conceptions of his mind, the torch which led him along the path of his discoveries. The pendulum, by proving the resistance of air, served to confirm him in his theory of gravitation; it likewise illustrated his theory of music by the intersection of waves of sound. The pendulum suspended to a fixed centre suggested to him the motion of the earth, with the moon, round the sun. And it is singular to reflect how the two marvellous discoveries with which he so happily commenced his glorious career, the isochronism of the pendulum and gravitation, should have occupied him at its close."

But in 1592, when Galileo was twenty-eight, he

had been forced, owing to the machinations of those who were jealous of his fame and abilities, assisted by the Jesuits (who objected to his new theories), to resign his professorship and retire to Padua, where he had for eighteen years been supporting himself by teaching mathematics, and where Cosimo as a youth had for some time been his pupil.

As soon as he became Grand Duke Cosimo invited Galileo, then forty-six years old, to return to Tuscany, and established him at Florence, giving him a villa at Arcetri (not far from where he was building his own new villa of Poggio Imperiale), and creating for him an appointment as "Chief Mathematician to the Grand Duke," with an annual salary of 1,000 *scudi*.[1] And in this capacity Galileo remained for twenty-three years, provided with a maintenance which left him free to prosecute his scientific studies, and shielded, under the personal protection of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, from the machinations of his enemies both at Florence and Rome; during which time he made the whole of his discoveries. And the subsequent history showed that had it not been for this protection on the part of Cosimo II. these discoveries would never have been made by Galileo; for nothing but this protection prevented the Jesuits from silencing him in 1610 as they eventually succeeded in doing in 1633.[2]

The above action on Cosimo's part very quickly produced astonishing results. Shortly after his establishment at Florence Galileo invented the tele-

[1] Equal nowadays to a salary of over £2,000 a year.
[2] *See* chap. xxviii. pp. 405-408.

scope,[1] and in the first year of Cosimo's reign began by its means to make those great discoveries which were destined to revolutionise man's knowledge of his place in the universe.[2] The celebrated astronomer, Sir John Herschel, says:—

"It is difficult to conceive what Galileo must have felt when, having constructed his telescope, he for the first time turned it to the heavens, and saw the mountains and valleys in the moon.—Then the moon was another earth; the earth another planet; and all were subject to the same laws. What an evidence of the simplicity and magnificence of nature! But at length he turned it again, still directing it upwards, and again he was lost: for he was now among the fixed stars; and if not magnified as he expected them to be, they were multiplied beyond measure. What a moment of exultation for such a mind as his!"

The villa of Poggio Imperiale gains a new interest when we realise that it must have been there that all these, and the other great astronomical wonders which during the next two or three years successively became known to Galileo, were first narrated to others. For he would certainly convey them first to one who had made it possible for him to make these discoveries, and who, though he was Grand Duke, Galileo knew to be as keenly interested in the matter as himself. We can imagine the enthusiasm with which, after

[1] Galileo's original telescope, with many of his other instruments, is still to be seen in the museum of Natural Science, Florence. Besides it and the pendulum, he invented the thermometer, the hydrostatic balance, and the proportional compass, discovered the laws of weight, and was the first experimental philosopher.

[2] Galileo's statue has consequently received a place in Florence's gallery of honour in the Uffizi colonnade beside Petrarch, Dante, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo.

a night spent among the stars, he would hasten down to relate to Cosimo some fresh discovery; as well as the amazement with which the circle gathered in the Grand Ducal villa on the slope of the Arcetri hill first heard the astounding truths which Galileo had to relate, which revolutionised all that had hitherto been believed on such matters, and proved that the earth was not the centre of the universe, but merely a minute planet in the solar system.

Galileo's celebrated tower at Arcetri,[1] from which "in the still midnight of far-off time its master read the secrets of the stars,"[2] stands overlooking Florence from the southern hills: as though to be a constant reminder of all that was from thence unfolded to mankind.

> "We hail
> Thy sunny slope, Arcetri, sung of old
> For its green vine; dearer to me, to most,
> As dwelt on by the great astronomer;
> . . . . Sacred be
> His villa (justly was it called the Gem[3]),
> Sacred the lawn, where many a cypress threw
> Its length of shadow, while he watched the stars."[4]

Thus did Florence, which had led the world in Learning and Art, now that the sovereignty in that domain had passed away from her, place on her brows a fresh crown of leadership, and show the way in that new branch of knowledge, Science, which was henceforth to be the chief interest of the intellect of the world. It was fitting that the Medici should be as closely associated with this new leadership as they had been with that of the past.

[1] The "Torre del Gallo."
[2] *Pascarel*, by Ouida.
[3] *Il Giojello.*
[4] Rogers's *Italy.*

Nor did their connection with this stepping forth by Florence on a fresh path of renown go without a permanent record. The first hitherto unknown stars revealed to Galileo by his telescope in the first year of Cosimo's reign were the satellites of Jupiter. And to these, in gratitude to one who had made it possible for him to carry on such investigations, Galileo gave the name of *the Medicean stars* (Stellae Medicae). Thus the satellites of Jupiter preserve for all time among scientific men a memorial that the Medici helped to bring about the first great discoveries of modern science.[1] And if the founding of Leghorn is to be considered a "masterpiece" on the part of Ferdinand I., far more may action which enabled these great revelations of science to be made by Galileo be considered so on the part of Cosimo II.

In 1610 Cosimo sent an embassy to France to condole with his cousin, Marie de Medici, on the sudden death of her husband, Henry IV., who was stabbed in his coach while proceeding to a state function; whereupon Marie became Queen Regent of France during the minority of her eldest son Louis, then nine years old. It was remarked that her nine-year-old son was as fit to reign as she was. Cosimo's envoy obtained scant attention from her to his message, for Marie could think of nothing but the grandeur of her coronation as Queen Regent, and constantly interrupted the envoy to describe it to him, and how her throne had "had nineteen steps." Marie's children were, Louis XIII. of France; Gaston,

Marie de Medici (2).

[1] *See* also chap. xxviii. pp. 438-439.

Duke of Orleans; Elizabeth, married to Philip IV. of Spain; Henrietta Maria, married to Charles I. of England;[1] and Christine, married to the Duke of Savoy; while her sister Eleonora's daughter Eleonora married the Emperor Ferdinand II.[2] Thus in the eleventh generation from Giovanni di Bicci we see a Medici seated on the throne of each of the four principal countries of Europe, France, Spain, England, and Germany.[3] Marie's subsequent history was a sad one. As Queen Regent, she was entirely ruled by her Minister, Concini, and her powerful mistress of the robes, Leonora Gallegai, whom she had brought from Florence, and who trafficked in all appointments throughout the kingdom. In 1617 Marie's son, Louis XIII., threw off her authority, confined her at Blois (whence she escaped[4]), and eventually

[1] Henrietta Maria's son, Charles II., with his dark hair and swarthy complexion, showed traces of the Medici blood.

[2] She was married to him at Innsbruck in 1622. There are two portraits of Eleonora Gonzaga at Florence, one a pretty picture of her as a child (in the Pitti Gallery), and the other when she was grown up (in the Uffizi Gallery), the latter by Sustermans.

[3] *See* vol. i. p. 14.

[4] Marie's escape from the castle of Blois had in it a decidedly comic element. She was imprisoned in the suite of apartments which had been those of Catherine de' Medici. Cardillac and the Count de Brenne, who assisted her to escape, decided that as all the doors and passages were carefully guarded she must drop from one of her windows on to the terrace (which at that time extended half way up to the first floor) overlooking the town, and from the terrace to the street. But the Queen was fat and unwieldy, and looked with terror at the slender rope-ladders provided, while she declared that for her to be seen swinging about in such a position would be exceedingly undignified. However, there was no other way, and finally, on the night of the 21st February 1618, she had to attempt it. With great difficulty they got her down the first ladder to the terrace, but in such a terrified state that she refused altogether to face the second ladder. It seemed that the attempt must fail. But eventually they discovered a narrow gully in the walls; they tied her up in a heavy cloak, and Cardillac guiding her course from above, and De Brenne dragging from below, she was tobogganned down to the street, more like a bale of goods than a queen of France. There she was placed in a carriage, which conveyed her in safety to Loches.

FRANCESCO, SON OF FERDINAND I.

*Burton.*] *Uffizi Gallery.*

ELEONORA DE' MEDICI, ELDEST DAUGHTER OF FERDINAND I.

*Burton*] [*Uffizi Gallery.*

exiled her from France. Advised by Cardinal Richelieu, he refused to make her any allowance unless she would return to Florence. But Marie's pride rebelled against becoming a mere appanage of the Tuscan court after having been Queen Regent of France, and nothing would induce her to accede to this; so she took refuge in Holland. After many hardships from want of any resources, and a fruitless visit to England in 1636 to her son-in-law Charles I. and her daughter Henrietta Maria, she retired in great poverty to Antwerp, her children being all either unwilling or unable to make her any allowance. Soon, however, she was requested by the authorities to leave Antwerp, and then migrated to Cologne, where the painter Rubens, who had often been employed by her when she was Queen of France,[1] gave her a house to live in. There after many sufferings she died in 1642 in absolute destitution, it is said in a hayloft.

Cosimo II. was the last of the Medici to be a banker. Soon after ascending the throne he abandoned the practice of private trading, closed the family bank with its branches in various capitals, and discontinued all commerce on his own account, considering that the practice was derogatory to a reigning sovereign, as well as harmful to the trade of the country. The step considerably reduced the income of the family, but their immense wealth made this of less consequence.

[1] The two large pictures by Rubens in the Sala di Rubens of the Uffizi Gallery, representing Henry IV. at the battle of Ivry, and his triumphant entry into Paris, were painted for Marie de Medici, and sent by her as a present to her uncle Ferdinand I. They are a portion of a set the remainder of which are in the Louvre.

In 1614, when Cosimo was four-and-twenty, and had been reigning for five years, all his life was changed in consequence of a severe illness, the result of an attack of malignant fever, and from this time forward he became a confirmed invalid. This permanent ill-health forced him to give but little attention to State affairs, which had its effect on the country, inducing a general apathy in public matters, under which the prosperity of the country declined; and it might have had more serious results had it not been Cosimo's good fortune to reign during a time when Europe was at peace, and when Tuscany was blessed with unusually abundant harvests. At the same time Cosimo's temperate and tolerant disposition made him respected and liked by the people, notwithstanding the undesirable results of a weak rule. And though forced to live a very quiet life, he did not shut himself up in gloomy seclusion, but continued to take interest in the amusements of the people and in social festivities, even though able himself to take little part in them. He also encouraged Art and Literature with all the zeal of his race, making various valuable additions to the family collections.

The political events of Cosimo's reign were few. His chief interest was in his navy, and he took every opportunity of adding to its strength and efficiency. In the construction of new ships he received much assistance from Sir Robert Dudley,[1] who had taken refuge at Leghorn and had great talents for shipbuilding. He invented for Cosimo

[1] Son of the Earl of Leicester by a previous marriage to that with Amy Robsart.

various new descriptions of ships of war; but it was eventually decided that for the Mediterranean warfare the galleys propelled by oars were better adapted than any other pattern of ship. Cosimo sent his fleet, led by the knights of San Stefano, to assist the Druses against the Turks, and in this service they won still further renown. On only one occasion was Cosimo involved in a dispute with another country which threatened to produce serious consequences. When in 1617 Louis XIII. threw off his mother's authority he caused her chief Minister, Concini, to be assassinated, and transferred the property of the murdered man to his own favourite, De Luynes. Cosimo took up the cause of Concini's son, refused to recognise the confiscation of property decreed by the French courts, and demanded that the murdered man's son should be allowed to inherit it. Much ill-feeling followed between the two countries, and mutual reprisals, which were only brought to an end by the intervention of the Duke of Lorraine. The Thirty Years' War, which began about a year before Cosimo's death, did not affect Tuscany, which was steadily sinking into a position of less and less importance in the affairs of Europe.

In 1614, the same year that Cosimo's severe illness occurred, the first death took place among the eight brothers and sisters.[1] Francesco, who had taken up a military career, and had been nominated to the command of the army, died at Pisa in December at the age of twenty. In his portrait in the Uffizi Gallery[2] he wears a very

[1] For list of Cosimo's brothers and sisters, *see* Appendix XII.
[2] Plate LXXVI.

splendid dress, consisting of a coat of mail with lace collar and ruffles, the peculiar wide padded breeches of the time, profusely embroidered in red and gold, and long scarlet-coloured stockings. In his hand he holds the baton denoting his command of the army. It is curious to note that on the table by his side he is given a jewelled coronet, having round it the Florentine lily repeated five or six times, as worn by the younger brothers and sons of the Grand Duke; this being the first time that this feature appears.[1]

Three years later, in December 1617, Cosimo's eldest sister, Eleonora, died, at the age of twenty-six. She had been engaged to Philip III. of Spain, but he broke off the engagement, and it is stated that Eleonora died of a broken heart in consequence. In her portrait in the Uffizi Gallery[2] she wears a jewelled coronet, a high ruff, and a very handsome dress with long open sleeves, though the full padded skirt has the effect of making her look very short.[3] Earlier in the same year Cosimo's second sister, Caterina,[4] then twenty-four, was

[1] He is buried in the family mausoleum. When in 1857 his coffin was opened the body was found "dressed in a doublet of white satin, with lace ruffles on the wrists, and a large cloak, also of white satin, extending down to the knees; and with stockings of silk, and long leather boots. Fixed inside the coffin was a plate of gilded bronze with his name, age, and the date of his death."

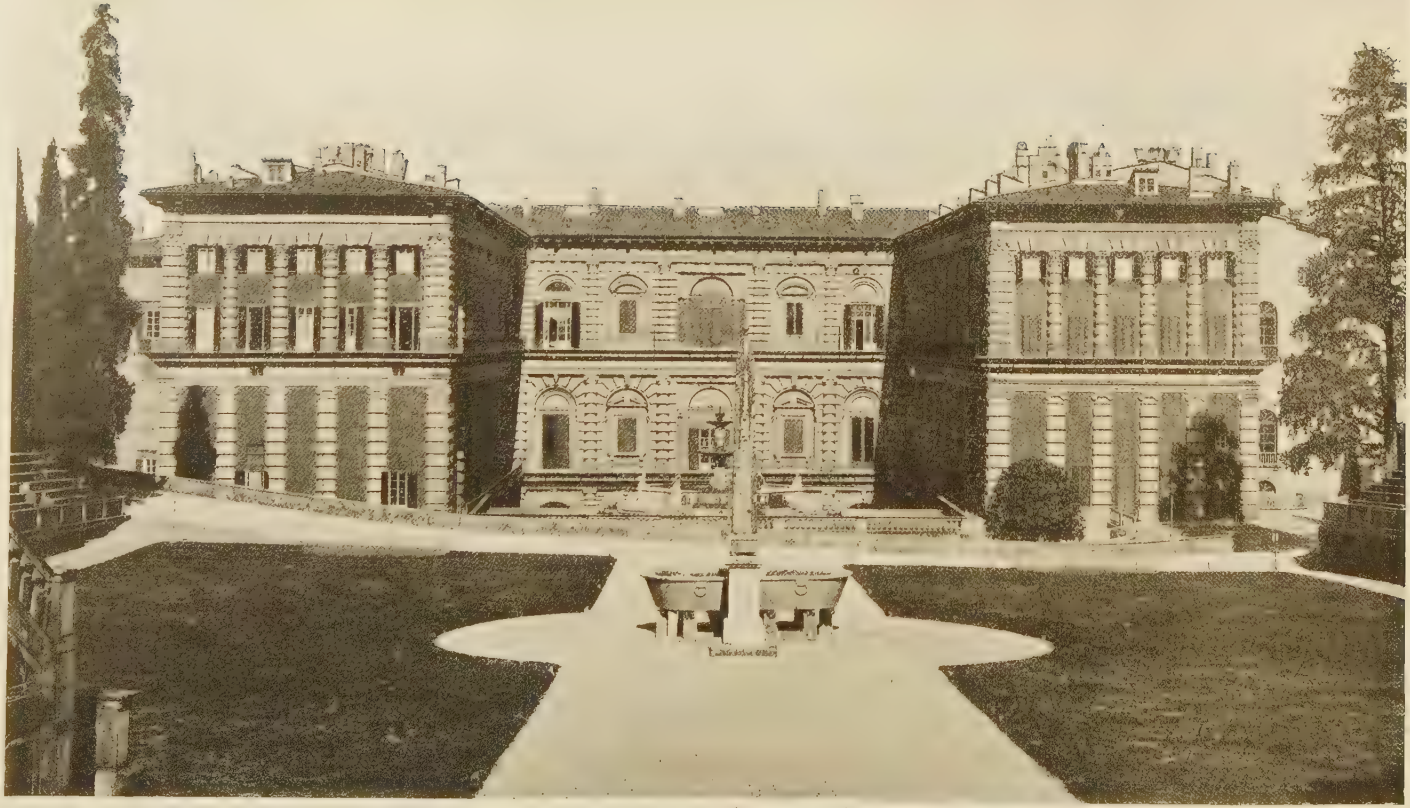
[2] Plate LXXVII.

[3] She is buried in the family mausoleum. When her coffin was opened in 1857 "the body was found clothed in a dress of silver and gold tissue, of violet colour, with large open sleeves, and with a very large ruff of the most beautiful lace round the neck. The skirt of the dress was covered all over with artificial flowers, and a garland of artifical flowers on the head. On the breast was a leaden plate bearing her name, age, and the date of her death."

[4] Plate LXXVIII. On the table are letters addressed to her as Duchess of Mantua. She wears a heavy pearl necklace, and her dress is profusely embroidered, while the sleeve is of a new pattern which had superseded that shown in her mother's portrait (Plate LXXI.).

CATERINA DE' MEDICI, DAUGHTER OF FERDINAND I., DUCHESS OF MANTUA.

*Alinari*] [*Uffizi Gallery.*



THE PITTI PALACE (BACK VIEW).

*View of the central block of the palace as seen from the amphitheatre, showing the two great wings added by Cosimo II. In this view the ground floor is hidden by the terrace, making the building appear only two stories high instead of three. On the terrace stands Ammanati's beautiful fountain. Below the terrace, between it and the amphitheatre, is a narrow strip of garden on the level of the ground floor of the palace. In the centre of the amphitheatre is the Egyptian obelisk.*

married to Ferdinand Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua. On being left a widow in 1626 she returned to Tuscany, and was made Governor of Siena, dying there of small-pox in 1629, at the age of thirty-six, with a reputation for great piety.[1] Caterina's portrait and that of her sister Claudia,[2] as well as others in the Pitti Gallery of Cosimo's brothers, show what a strong family likeness existed between all these brothers and sisters, all of them having the same peculiar nose and mouth (unpleasing, but showing much character) which we see in Cosimo's portrait, and which they evidently inherited from their mother, Christine of Lorraine.[3] And it is remarkable to notice that this feature appears again in yet a third generation, as can be seen by the portraits of Cosimo's children, Ferdinand II., his four brothers, and their sisters Margherita and Anna.[4]

Cosimo's second brother, Carlo, became a cardinal, and rose to importance at the Vatican, living to the age of seventy. His third brother, Lorenzo, who was twenty when Cosimo died, lived to the age of forty-eight. Lorenzo's twin sister, Maddalena, became a nun at the age of twenty in the convent of the Crocetta a few months after her brother Cosimo's death, and died there in 1633, at the age of thirty-three.[5] The youngest

[1] She is buried in the family mausoleum.

[2] *See* Plate LXXXIII.

[3] *See* Plate LXXX.

[4] *See* Plates LXXXII., LXXXIV., LXXXV., LXXXVI., LXXXVIII., XC., XCI., and XCII.

[5] She was buried by her own desire in the convent of the Crocetta, but in 1810 her remains were removed to the family mausoleum. When in 1857 her coffin was opened, the body was found, not clothed as a nun, but "in a dress of violet-coloured brocade, with many flowers of silver sewn on the skirt of the dress, and scattered round the head, perhaps having originally formed a garland. The shoes were of velvet in good preservation, with very high heels of cork. Inside the coffin was a leaden plate with her name, age, and the date of her death."

sister of all, Claudia, was married in 1620, the year of her brother Cosimo's death, when she was sixteen, to Federigo della Rovere, the only son of the Duke of Urbino, a worthless boy two years younger than herself, who, however, died of his excesses before he was eighteen, when she returned to Florence with one baby daughter, who was the sole heiress of her grandfather, the old Duke of Urbino.[1]

In 1619 Cosimo's brother-in-law, Maria Maddalena's brother, became the Emperor Ferdinand II.[2] Cosimo's health was by this time rapidly failing, and it being evident that he had not long to live, he made a will by which on his death he appointed his mother, Christine, and his wife, Maria Maddalena, joint Regents of Tuscany during the minority of his eldest son, then ten years old. Cosimo died on the 28th February 1620, at the age of thirty, much regretted by the people, after a reign of eleven years. He left eight children, five sons and three daughters. He had an exceedingly magnificent funeral, being buried at first in the New Sacristy pending the completion of the family mausoleum, to which his remains were, two generations later, removed.[3]

[1] *See* chap. xxviii. p. 394.

[2] The Emperor Rudolph II., son of Maximilian II., died in 1612, and was succeeded by his brother Matthias, who died in 1619. Ferdinand II. was their first cousin, the son of the Archduke Charles, who was the brother of Maximilian II.

[3] The bronze statue over his tomb (Plate CIII.) is by Tacca, and is a splendid piece of work. The bronze under-robe is made to resemble gold, while the upper robe is made to resemble dark green velvet. The crown and jewelled cushion stolen about twenty-five years ago from the top of the sarcophagus have recently been replaced (1907). When in 1857 the Medici coffins were opened the body of Cosimo II. was found "reduced to bones, the head being covered with three hoods, one of silk, one of oil-cloth, and one of velvet. The body was clothed

Strangely enough, a mistake has been made with regard to the length of the reigns of Cosimo II. and his son Ferdinand II., the former being always stated to have reigned twelve years and the latter forty-nine years, instead of eleven years and fifty years respectively, as was actually the case. This is owing to a mistake as to the date of the death of Cosimo II. which has been stated to be 28th February 1621, even Napier making this mistake and so stating that Cosimo II. reigned for twelve years and Ferdinand II. for forty-nine years.[1] But that this is an error is clearly proved by the report on the examination of the coffins in 1857 (*see* foot-note), as the 28th February 1620 is the date found on the leaden plate inside Cosimo II.'s coffin, and also on the two gold medallions discovered therein; which latter fact is conclusive. It may be wondered how an historian like Napier could be wrong on such a point; but the explanation is that Napier's history was written in 1847, and so before the opened coffin came to bear its silent testimony.

in the great cloak of Grand Master of the Order of San Stefano, worn over a doublet of black silk richly embroidered in black, with long hanging sleeves, and a collarette of lace; the leather belt was fastened with a clasp of oxidised iron; black Spanish breeches, black silk stockings, and cloth shoes. Under the shoulders were found two gold medallions which had escaped the greed of those who had rifled the coffin; these had on one side his likeness, with his name and title written round it, and on the other the Medicean balls, surmounted with the crown with the sceptre passing through it, and the motto *Virtutis proemia*, and date of his death, 28th February 1620. On the breast was a leaden plate with the inscription 'Cosimo Medici II., fourth Grand Duke of Tuscany, died 28th February 1620, at the age of thirty.' The coffin was very large, but entirely broken, and rifled of all precious things except the two gold medallions, which had slipped behind the shoulders. The remains were placed in a new coffin and re-buried." (*Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum.* 1857.)

[1] *See* Napier's *Florentine History*, vol. v. pp. 393 and 421.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### FERDINAND II.

*Born* 1610. (*Reigned* 1620-1670.) *Died* 1670.

The fifty years' reign of Ferdinand II. saw a long step made on the downward path on which the once great family was now plainly embarked; and the pace of that descent, which had been slow at first, now quickens. Incipient decay, becoming more and more pronounced, is the keynote of the reign of Ferdinand II., even though there were still many things done which were worthy of the family's best days.

Cosimo II.'s will included very stringent provisions to ensure that the government should be satisfactorily carried on during the minority of his son. While it laid down that the two Grand Duchesses, his mother and his wife, were to be joint Regents, it also ruled that they were to be assisted by a council of four Ministers, who were named. The salary of each of these four members of the council was limited to 2,000 crowns. No foreigner of any sort was to hold any office of State, or even of domestic service in the court. No resident ambassador from any country was to be allowed at Florence, those of France, Spain, and Austria being expressly debarred. All private

trade by the Regents was prohibited. And, above all, the opening of Cosimo's treasure-vaults was absolutely forbidden, except to pay the marriage portion of a princess, or to give public aid in a time of national calamity. The penalty for infringing these conditions was deprivation of office as his children's guardians.[1] But these provisions, carefully drawn up as they were, only served to afford an example of how easily all such arrangements can be set aside.

The Grand Duchess Christine was now fifty-six, while her daughter-in-law, the Grand Duchess Maria Maddalena, was thirty. Both were excellent women; but they were without any talent for governing; they were still less endowed with the smallest financial ability; and they were excessively fond of pomp and splendour. Never before had such gorgeous magnificence been displayed by the court as now ensued under their rule. They were accompanied on all occasions by a numerous retinue arrayed in the richest costumes,[2] were surrounded by every accessory which could add to their grandeur, and seem to have considered it incumbent on them to make as splendid a display as possible in order to maintain in proper style the importance of the young Grand Duke for whom they were Regents. Everything was done with the utmost extravagance, money being spent in the most lavish way on every matter which they took in hand. Added to this the

[1] *Diario della Città di Firenze, dall'anno 1613 fino all'anno 1635.* State Archives of Tuscany.

[2] We are given ample opportunity of realising how magnificent were the costumes of both the men and the ladies who took part in these assemblies from the numerous portraits belonging to this time to be seen in the long corridor between the Uffizi and Pitti Galleries.

Grand Duchess Christine, who took the lead, was intensely bigoted, and ready to fall an easy prey to the numerous ecclesiastics who gathered round her, and who in a very short time had established a strong control over all Tuscan affairs; while every order emanating from Rome, no matter how harmful to the country or disastrous to the fortunes of the family, was received by her with the most abject submission.

The results were those to be expected from such conditions. The provisions of Cosimo's will were ignored; the immense treasure which he had left, and ordered not to be drawn upon except in case of public emergency, was all squandered during the eight years' regency of the two Grand Duchesses; want of administrative talent and subordination to priestly influence produced corruption and misgovernment in every department of public affairs; and under this state of things the country sank more and more into a condition of poverty and misrule; while the only persons who profited were the crowds of ecclesiastics, and the so-called "converts," each of whom on the recommendation of a priest received a pension from the Regents. Sustermans' portrait of the Grand Duchess Christine[1] (who was primarily responsible for these results) shows her wearing the heavy black dress, widow's cap, and immense black veil which she always wore after her husband Ferdinand I.'s death. In her hand she has a locket with his likeness, no rings on her fingers, and no other ornament except a large gold cross.

[1] Plate LXXX.

THE GRAND DUCHESS CHRISTINE AT FIFTY-FIVE.
By Sustermans.

*Alinari*] [*Corsini Gallery, Florence.*

THE GRAND DUCHESS MARIA MADDALENA,
AS REGENT OF TUSCANY.

*Alinari*] [*Uffizi Gallery.*

Maria Maddalena of Austria.

The Grand Duchess Maria Maddalena necessarily took only a secondary part in the affairs of the Regency, to which her nomination was perhaps intended mainly as a formality, it being recognised that the chief power would rest with her mother-in-law. Being left at her husband Cosimo's death with eight small children all below the age of ten, she had, in bringing them up, plenty of domestic cares to be added to those of government of the country. Besides her eldest son Ferdinand, her other children were Maria Cristina (twin sister to Ferdinand, born 1610), Giovanni Carlo (born 1611), Margherita (born 1612), Mattias (born 1613), Francesco (born 1614), Anna (born 1616), and Leopold (born 1617). In bringing up her children the Grand Duchess Maria Maddalena showed considerable sense, for her sons were all given a very high class of education, the excellence of which they demonstrated in their after lives; while a broad-minded policy was shown in the fact that notwithstanding the strong ecclesiastical influence which pervaded the court they were all in turn sent to be taught science by Galileo. The portrait of Maria Maddalena[1] shows her in her court dress as Regent, with her crown by her side, the crown being very large and somewhat different from that of her mother-in-law (Plate LXXI.).[2]

Ferdinand, the eldest son of Cosimo II., was a boy of a thoroughly good disposition, his gentle

[1] Plate LXXXI. In this and all her portraits Maria Maddalena has reddish hair.

[2] Regarding the character and achievements of Maria Maddalena, *see* also pp. 401-403.

and affectionate nature being conspicuous, while his constant endeavour when he grew up to secure peace in Italy caused him to become noted as a peacemaker. But he had one fatal flaw—a want of strength of character; while the influences by which his grandmother's subordination to priestly domination caused him to be surrounded from a very early age were such as tended to increase this defect. His portrait by Sustermans, in the Pitti Gallery, at the age of fourteen[1] shows him wearing armour, but he did not display any military talents. In 1623, when he was thirteen, his young aunt Claudia returned to Florence as a widow of nineteen with her infant daughter, Vittoria della Rovere, and Ferdinand was forthwith betrothed to this child in order to unite the Duchy of Urbino (which would be her inheritance when her grandfather, the Duke of Urbino, died) with Tuscany. The document drawn up on the occasion of this betrothal specially laid down that Vittoria's dowry was to be the Duchy of Urbino, which was to be incorporated with Tuscany.

Loss of Urbino.

But a few months later Pope Gregory XV., who had succeeded Paul V. in 1621, died, and was succeeded by Urban VIII. (1623-1644), whose main endeavour was to enrich in every way his family, the Barberini. Urban VIII. soon after becoming Pope put forward a claim on behalf of the Church to the state of Urbino whenever its aged Duke, Francesco Maria della Rovere II., who was then eighty and in failing

[1] Plate LXXXII.

health, should die, claiming that it would then be a "vacant fief," and as such would belong to the States of the Church. This claim was the more outrageous in that the Duchy of Urbino not only belonged to the child Vittoria della Rovere as her grandfather's sole heir, but also, supposing she was to be set aside on account of being a girl, it then devolved upon the boy Ferdinand himself. When Christine of Lorraine was betrothed to Ferdinand I., Catherine de' Medici gave her as her dowry 600,000 crowns, a transfer to her of all Catherine's rights in the Medici property in Florence, and also of the latter's claim on the Duchy of Urbino, which had never been annulled even when Adrian VI. restored the dukedom to Francesco Maria della Rovere I.[1] Thus Ferdinand II. claimed Urbino on a double ground. First, he claimed it as being the lawful property of his betrothed wife Vittoria, she being the only child of the Duke's only son, and not to be set aside by a Papal "bull of investiture" limiting the succession to heirs male only, seeing that the Dukes of Urbino did not admit that their title to their hereditary Duchy depended on any such bull of investiture. Secondly, if Vittoria's claim was set aside, then Ferdinand claimed Urbino in his own right as inherited from Catherine de' Medici, the daughter of Lorenzo (Duke of Urbino); on the ground that though the Duchy of Urbino had been given back by Adrian VI. to Francesco Maria della Rovere, yet the Medici family had never acquiesced in this transfer of Urbino from them; this being witnessed

[1] *See* vol. i. p. 430.

to by the fact that on all occasions Clement VII. had styled his relative Catherine "Duchess of Urbino," and that she was even so styled in her formal marriage documents. Moreover, that this fact also proved that there was at that time, at all events, no restriction of the succession to heirs male only. He therefore maintained that the will of Catherine de' Medici made him, Ferdinand, the lawful Duke of Urbino supposing Vittoria's claim was set aside. Nevertheless the Papal troops were marched into Urbino, ready to take possession of it the moment that the octogenarian Duke should breathe his last. All that the Pope would concede was that Vittoria should inherit the movable property of the Duke.

Claudia.

In 1625,[1] when Ferdinand was fifteen, his aunt Claudia,[2] then twenty-one, married again, and this time more satisfactorily. She was married at Innsbruck to Leopold V., Archduke of Tyrol, the brother of her sister-in-law Maria Maddalena and of the Emperor Ferdinand II. Claudia's home henceforth was the Schloss Amras,[3] beautifully situated amidst the pine woods and waterfalls on the lower slope of the mountains overlooking Innsbruck, but with its small rooms and restricted area somewhat of a change from the magnificent Grand Ducal palace of Tuscany. Claudia did not take her daughter Vittoria with

[1] It was in this year that in England Charles I. succeeded his father, James I.

[2] Plate LXXXIII.

[3] At the Schloss Amras, the residence of the Archdukes of Tyrol, Claudia collected round her many portraits of her family, which are still to be seen there.

FERDINAND II., ELDEST SON OF COSIMO II., AT FOURTEEN.
By Sustermans.

*Alinari*] [*Pitti Gallery.*

CLAUDIA DE' MEDICI, DAUGHTER OF FERDINAND I.,
ARCHDUCHESS OF THE TYROL.
By Sustermans.

*Brogi*] [*Uffizi Gallery.*

her to Innsbruck, but as the latter was betrothed to Ferdinand left her at Florence in charge of her own sister Maddalena, in the convent of the Crocetta, where Vittoria was brought up until she was fourteen. By her second marriage Claudia had two sons and two daughters. When in 1632 her husband Leopold died, she was appointed Regent of Tyrol on behalf of her young son, and ruled that country well during the most difficult time in its history, showing herself a woman of much ability. She was Regent from 1632 to 1646, and not only greatly improved the administration and resources of Tyrol, but also by her wisdom and watchful care over the defences of the country she saved it from being drawn into the Thirty Years' War in which all the rest of the German empire was involved. In the museum at Innsbruck is to be seen a large picture depicting her sitting on her throne presiding at a meeting of the Landstag on the occasion of an urgent national crisis. Her eldest son, Ferdinand Karl, married his first cousin, Anna de' Medici.[1] Claudia's fine portrait by Sustermans in the Uffizi Gallery shows her as she was at the age of thirty; in her dress there is an absence of the excessive ornament then so much in fashion; she has also dropped the high "Medici" collar, and wears a small plain one. In the corridor between the Uffizi and Pitti Galleries there is also a fine portrait of her husband, the Archduke Leopold, dressed in a tunic of yellow leather much embroidered, long yellow leather boots reaching to the thigh, a wide sash round the waist to keep his sword in its place, and by his side his helmet with

[1] *See* p. 422.

a huge plume of blue and white ostrich feathers, which, since the whole structure represents a height of about three feet, must have been highly inconvenient when riding.

In 1627, Ferdinand, being then seventeen, was sent on a tour to see something of the world before beginning to rule on his own account. He went first to Rome, but there the numerous Barberini family, full of pride, and hating the Medici owing to the opposition they had experienced on their behalf in the matter of Urbino, behaved towards him with great insolence, and he departed thence to Vienna to visit his uncle, the Emperor Ferdinand II., where, with the love of peace which was his characteristic, he made an endeavour to bring to an end the dispute taking place over the succession to the Duchy of Mantua; in which, however, he was unsuccessful. In 1628 he returned home, and took over charge of the government; but his feeling for his mother and grandmother would not allow him entirely to deprive them of authority; so that they continued to exercise a considerable influence in the government. Shortly after his return his second sister, Margherita,[1] then seventeen, was married to Eduardo Farnese, Duke of Parma.[2] This marriage strengthened the position of Tuscany in the politics of Italy, constantly troubled as these were by Urban VIII., Parma and Tuscany becoming allies; while it was also of considerable importance in its consequences two

[1] Plate LXXXIV (p. 410). For list of Ferdinand's brothers and sisters, *see* Appendix XIII.

[2] There is a portrait of Margherita's husband, Eduardo Farnese, Duke of Parma, in the Uffizi Gallery.

generations later when, the throne of Tuscany threatening to become vacant owing to Cosimo III. having no grandchildren, it was held that after the demise of Cosimo's daughter the rightful heirs to that throne were Margherita's descendants belonging to the house of Parma.[1]

In the following year the quarrel over the succession to Mantua caused Richelieu, the all-powerful Minister of France, to send a French army across the Alps which occupied Susa, while the Austrian army seized Mantua; but the conflict did not spread into Tuscany, though the latter state had to mobilise its whole military strength and remain in a state of preparedness for war. Soon afterwards Florence suffered from an outbreak of the plague, which raged with great violence for many months, and plunged the city into the utmost misery. In this time of distress the measures taken by Ferdinand were worthy of his ancestors, the earlier Medici. Money and provisions were liberally distributed to the poor, 150,000 ducats being given to those of the wool and silk trades alone; and Rondinelli, who was an eye-witness, says that all that was done was wisely directed, "not in mere donations, but also in useful works and agricultural labours."[2] Lazzarettos were organised, and a general quarantine established; the court retired into the fortress of the Belvedere, which, occupying a high eminence, enjoyed fresher air than the Grand Ducal palace at the foot of the hill; but Ferdinand and his young brothers, Giovanni Carlo, Mattias, and Francesco, "nobly disdaining

[1] *See* chap. xxix. pp. 480 and 481.

[2] *Relazione del Contagione dell' anni 1630 e 1633*, by Rondinelli.

this shelter while the people were perishing, went daily into the city, and with hand and voice administered comfort to the sufferers."[1] The pestilence raged for thirteen dismal months, during which time in and around the city twelve thousand people died. Ferdinand established a Board of Health, and this body issued many wise regulations, while they also forced the inmates of the immense number of monasteries and convents with which the city was crowded both to obey sanitary rules, and also to bear their share in receiving and helping those who were convalescent. But Ferdinand's sound sanitary regulations were denounced by the priests as impious; the Pope demanded that the Board of Health should be censured, and required that a severe penance should be exacted from its members; and Ferdinand, unable to resist the pressure of his bigoted grandmother, was forced, notwithstanding his own and the general indignation, to comply with these arbitrary demands; with the result that the Board of Health was made to do penance for having adopted measures which were in every way right and desirable.

In 1631 the war-cloud departed from Italy to spread instead over Germany. Richelieu brought the celebrated Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, into the contest, and the latter ran his short but brilliant course of victory. Ferdinand's two brothers, Mattias and Francesco (then respectively eighteen and seventeen), were both eager to take part in the great events occurring north

[1] *Relazione del Contagione dell' anni 1630 e 1633*, by Rondinelli. Francesco himself died of the plague five years afterwards.

of the Alps; and the Grand Duchess Maria Maddalena being also anxious to visit her brother the Emperor, in order to see whether he could not assist to prevent the Pope from seizing Urbino when its Duke should die, accompanied her sons Mattias and Francesco on this journey. Unfortunately, however, she fell ill on the way, and died at Passau in November, her body being brought back to Florence by her two sons, and buried in San Lorenzo.[1]

And so passes away another of this family who deserves an honourable record. As a young wife Maria Maddalena, high born, virtuous, sensible, and charming in character and manners, had come to Florence bringing brightness, joy, and animation with her, had helped to keep the life of the court free from scandals, and with her accomplished sisters-in-law had made the Grand Ducal palace and her villa of Poggio Imperiale centres of joyous social amusement and relaxation. When her husband's health failed she had proved herself an efficient helpmeet to him, bearing alone the burden of the court entertainments which he wished still to be kept up, showing herself able to give him helpful advice, and in every way smoothing his life as an invalid. Lastly, when he died and she was left as Regent of the country and at the same time a young mother with a large family of small children, she showed herself gifted

[1] She is buried in the family mausoleum. When her coffin was opened in 1857 the body was found clothed in black velvet and reduced to bones. On her coffin was a leaden plate bearing her name and titles, and a long inscription detailing without exaggeration her many virtues. On the breast, hung round the neck by a chain, was a gold medallion bearing her portrait and name, and on the reverse a bird of Paradise in flight and the motto *Ethera*.

with sound sense and courage in the manner she brought them up despite the narrow-minded tendencies by which she was surrounded. And however much she may have been wanting in administrative and financial ability, she deserves high praise for this other portion of her work. Every one of her five sons showed in their after lives the effects of a good bringing up and of a large-minded tolerant spirit learnt in their early years; and while her son Francesco died too soon to evince any special ability, her other four sons all made themselves greatly distinguished not only by their good qualities of character but also by their high attainments. Her daughter Maria Cristina died at twenty-two, but her other two daughters, Margherita and Anna, both showed in after years good qualities and marked ability. When at the age of forty Maria Maddalena died, her son Ferdinand and his sister Maria Cristina were twenty-one, her sons Giovanni Carlo, Mattias, Francesco, and Leopold were respectively twenty, eighteen, seventeen, and fourteen, her daughter Margherita was nineteen, and her daughter Anna fifteen years old. As in the Boboli gardens one sits in the long *pergola* (now so empty and deserted) which is always associated with her memory, it inevitably arouses a vision of the past as one is drawn to think of how different it must have looked in Maria Maddalena's day, when thronged with the gay crowd of young people whom she and her two elder sisters-in-law gathered round them in the first years after her marriage, or later on with the brilliant embroideries and brocades of the gorgeously dressed retinue (pictured

for us in the gallery hard by) who followed her in the days of her Regency, or again with the joyous groups of her young sons and daughters and their numerous companions who surrounded her in the last few years of her life.

Their mother's funeral being over, Mattias and Francesco again prepared to proceed northwards, and as Gustavus Adolphus was threatening to cross the Alps and bring the war into Italy, these two brothers in 1632 started from Florence with money, arms, and two regiments supplied by Tuscany to assist against him, and to learn war in Germany under the great Wallenstein. Soon afterwards, however, the whole aspect of affairs was changed by the battle of Lutzen in November 1632, at which Gustavus Adolphus was killed, and Richelieu's pride for a time humbled. In this same year Ferdinand's twin sister Maria Cristina died in August, at the age of twenty-two, at the villa of Poggio Imperiale, the favourite residence of this generation of the family.[1]

Meanwhile Francesco della Rovere II., Duke of Urbino, at length died at the age of eighty-two. The Papal troops at once took possession of Urbino, almost before the breath was out of his body; while the Emperor Ferdinand II. was too much occupied with the war in Germany to be able to take up the cudgels on his nephew's behalf and prevent this seizure of Urbino, as he otherwise would have done; and Ferdinand, feeling himself

[1] She is buried in the family mausoleum. She was evidently buried splendidly dressed and adorned with many jewels, for when in 1857 the Medici coffins were examined hers was found to have been entirely rifled by thieves, and only a garland of artificial flowers round her head remained, even her dress being torn to pieces.

unable to resist a Pope without assistance, and hampered by his grandmother's opposition to such a course, as being sacrilege, had to acquiesce in seeing his and his future wife's inheritance robbed from them. The matter created much bad blood between the Barberini and Medici families; Cosimo II.'s brother Lorenzo made strong endeavours to get Philip IV. of Spain[1] to oppose the Pope's action, but his efforts were unsuccessful, and only recoiled upon himself.[2] The general result of the whole affair was that Pope Urban VIII. nourished an undying hatred against the Medici throughout his pontificate, thwarting them on all occasions, making every priest and monk in Tuscany an enemy of the Government, and creating incessant difficulties in the administration of a country in which priestly influence was supreme; while by the weakness which Tuscany had displayed over this question of Urbino it lost all weight in European politics. It was a difficult position for a youth of twenty-two to have to confront; and though a Cosimo I. would have met it and overcome the difficulties (no doubt with much bloodshed), Ferdinand II. was not cast in so strong a mould.

Galileo (2).

It was not long before Urban VIII. found a means of venting his spleen upon Ferdinand, and in a manner which has had the effect of bringing a lasting slur upon the reign of the latter. Galileo, since his achievements in the first year of Cosimo II.'s reign, had during the years

[1] Philip IV. had succeeded his father, Philip III., in 1621.
[2] *See* p. 425.

1609-1632 made many and marvellous astronomical discoveries, in the course of which he had had to carry on a perpetual contest with the Jesuits, who endeavoured in every way to silence him. In 1611[1] he had visited Rome, had demonstrated his various discoveries to Pope Paul V., and been well received by the latter. Returning to Florence, and publishing more and more astronomical wonders, he was in 1616 summoned by Paul V. to Rome, where his statement that the earth revolved round the sun was condemned by the Inquisition; whereupon he ostensibly acquiesced in the falseness of his theory,[2] and promised not to republish this doctrine. During the next seventeen years (1616-1633) Galileo, though still attacked by the theologians, had lived more or less at peace under the ægis of the Grand Duke, going again to Rome in 1624, and being received there with honour by the new Pope, Urban VIII. He again went to Rome in 1630, on which occasion he received a "caution" to make his books purely mathematical and not doctrinal, and with this caution was allowed to publish them. In 1632 he published his *Dialogues*. By this time, however, the affair of Urbino had occurred, the Pope was incensed with the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and the weakness of the latter had been fully displayed. Galileo was therefore in 1633 charged with having gone back from his promise of 1616, and summoned to appear before the Inquisition in Rome, to answer for his writings which, in maintaining the fixed position

[1] It was in this year that Galileo discovered the rings of the planet Saturn.

[2] As he rose from his knees Galileo is said to have whispered to a friend "Eppur si muove" ("Nevertheless it does move").

of the sun and the movement of the earth round it, propounded a doctrine which was declared by the Pope to be in flat contradiction to the Bible. The causes for this arraignment of Galileo are said to have been twofold, the bitter animosity of the Jesuits against all genuine philosophy, and the enmity of the Pope against the Medici, whose special *protégé* Galileo had been for more than twenty years.

Accordingly commissioners were sent from Rome with orders to conduct Galileo[1] thither, notwithstanding that he pleaded illness; and Ferdinand II. and his grandmother, the Grand Duchess Christine, stood far too much in awe of priestly condemnation to think of offering any opposition to this arbitrary proceeding. At Rome Galileo, now seventy years old and broken in health, was threatened with torture by the Inquisition; his theories were formally condemned, he was made to recant on his knees his so-called errors, and especially to declare his doctrine as to the movement of the earth false, and was kept a prisoner until the Pope's will regarding him should be made known. Ferdinand II. has received much execration for having permitted the Pope thus to treat Galileo. For Ferdinand's weakness there is nothing to be said, but it would seem that the blame cast upon him in the matter has been excessive, and that it has not been sufficiently realised that he was still to a very large extent under the domination of his grandmother, the

[1] There is a good portrait of Galileo by Sustermans in the Uffizi Gallery. It was presented to the gallery by Ferdinand's brother, Prince Leopold, who was one of Galileo's most promising pupils.

Grand Duchess Christine, especially in a matter which touched religion, and that he had been brought up to consider opposition to a Pope's direct command as a deadly sin which nothing could excuse. He must have changed his nature before he could have withstood a Pope's condemnation on a point of this kind.

Galileo having thus recanted his "errors" was condemned by the Inquisition to perpetual imprisonment, but the Pope commuted the sentence to residence in retirement in the gardens of S.S. Trinità al Monte, and after a short time there he was allowed to remove to Florence, where after residing for a little space under the personal charge of the Archbishop he was permitted, though still a prisoner of the Inquisition, to move to his villa at Arcetri on condition that he lived in retirement and received no visitors; but he never published anything more. In 1634 he lost his only daughter, a nun, Maria Celeste, who had been his chief comfort in his troubles; and in 1637 was allowed by the Inquisition to move to his house in the Costa San Giorgio,[1] but on condition that he did not go out into the city. There Ferdinand, who had been his pupil as a boy (and who had been aimed at by the Pope together with him), visited the old man and condoled with him on the unjust treatment he had received.[2] Galileo soon afterwards became blind, and when Milton visited him

[1] There is a likeness of him painted in fresco on the front of the house.

[2] A tablet over the door, put up by a subsequent generation, states in grandiloquent language that here the majesty of the Grand Duke did not disdain to do honour to the glory of Science in the person of Galileo.

in 1638 was no longer able to see anything more of those wonders of the heavens which he had explored. He retired again to Arcetri, and consecrated to science the last remains of his energies, with a heart full of remembrance of his beloved daughter, "who," he wrote, "calls me, calls me continually; while I wait to change my present prison for that community august and eternal." But he was comforted, he said, with two thoughts, "that I have not ever declined from piety and reverence for the Church, and my own conscience." He died at Arcetri in January 1642 without any enmity against those who had spoilt his life.[1]

Ferdinand was anxious to erect a monument to him, but the Jesuits opposed this, and as usual prevailed, and Ferdinand had to content himself with giving Galileo burial in the chapel of the Medici family in the church of Santa Croce. It is, however, pleasant to record that this wrong done by the Jesuits to Galileo's memory was rectified by the Medici ere they passed away; and the very last year of their rule was signalised by the deserved honour to Galileo being at last given, by the erection in 1737 in the nave of Santa Croce of the fine monument to him, his remains being removed to it from the chapel of the Medici. Dean Stanley says that it was from the burial of Galileo and Michelangelo in this church that Santa Croce gradually became the recognised shrine of Italian genius;[2] while Byron, in enumerating those whose

[1] Galileo's great successor, Newton, was born in the same year that Galileo died.

[2] It is fitting that Florence, "the home of all who live by thought," should be the city to hold that shrine.

dust makes Santa Croce glorious,[1] makes special mention of Galileo:—

> "In Santa Croce's holy precincts lie
> Ashes which make it holier, dust which is
> Even in itself an immortality,
> Though there were nothing save the past, and this,
> The particle of those sublimities
> Which have relapsed to chaos:—here repose
> Angelo's, Alfieri's, bones, and his
> The starry Galileo, with his woes."

In 1633 (the year that Galileo was summoned to Rome) the plague again broke out in Florence; and this time there was no Board of Health, former experience having very effectually put a stop to any further action of that kind. Instead, therefore, of wise sanitary measures superstition reigned supreme, accompanied by religious ceremonies which in puerility and intellectual abasement surpassed everything previously seen. The *Madonna dell' Impruneta* was brought to Florence and carried through the streets, "followed by crowds whose contact gave fresh vigour to the pestilence"; and for many months Florence again became a city of mourning.

In 1634, Vittoria della Rovere being now fourteen, the marriage between her and Ferdinand took place. Brought up in the seclusion of the convent of the Crocetta, Vittoria to a naturally frivolous disposition added an entire ignorance of all the circumstances of ordinary life, together with "a most profound admiration for everything connected

[1] "The church of Santa Croce would disappoint you as much inside as out if the presence of great men did not always cast a mingled shadow of the awful and the beautiful over our thoughts" (Leigh Hunt).

with the Church." It was easy, therefore, to see that she was not the sort of person likely to be of much assistance to Ferdinand in the difficulties which surrounded him through the dominance of the Jesuits and other ecclesiastical orders over the country. She brought with her as her dowry the movable property of the Duke of Urbino, and this added many valuable pictures to those already possessed by the Medici. In the Uffizi Gallery the portrait by Piero della Francesca of Federigo di Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, and his Duchess, of Pope Julius II. by Raphael, of Francesco della Rovere I. and Eleonora Gonzaga by Titian, the two pictures of the *Reclining Venus* by Titian, and the portrait of Francesco della Rovere II. by Baroccio; and in the Pitti Gallery the portrait of Guidobaldo della Rovere II. (Vittoria's grandfather) by Zuccheri, the *Magdalen* by Titian, *La Bella* by Titian, the portrait called the *Englishman* by Titian, and the *Martyrdom of St Agatha* by Sebastian del Piombo, besides many others of lesser note, all formed part of Vittoria's dowry, which also included a valuable collection of majolica and Urbino-ware, most of which now forms part of the treasures of the museum of the Bargello. This marriage was shortly afterwards followed by the death, at the age of twenty, of Ferdinand's manly young brother Francesco, who died, greatly regretted by all, in the camp of the Imperial army before Ratisbon, of the plague. His portrait[1] by Sustermans, which hangs in one of the rooms of the villa of Poggio a Caiano, shows him as he was at eighteen. He wears armour, but it has

[1] Plate LXXXV.

MARGHERITA DE' MEDICI, DAUGHTER OF COSIMO II., DUCHESS OF PARMA.
By Sustermans.

*Brogi*] [*Villa of Poggio a Caiano.*

FRANCESCO, FOURTH SON OF COSIMO II.
By Sustermans.

*Brogi*] [*Villa of Poggio a Caiano.*

only to be compared with that of his ancestor Giovanni delle Bande Nere[1] to see that armour is by this time no longer worn for use, but merely for show. And the large lace collar, the lace cuffs, and the sash, not worn round the waist as hitherto, but over the shoulder, all tell the same tale.

In 1636 Ferdinand, ashamed of the many humiliations he suffered from the subordination of the whole country to the Jesuits, and at the state of misgovernment to which it had thereby been reduced, had just resolved to emancipate himself from the Grand Duchess Christine's authority and to rule independently, when in December of that year she died, at the age of seventy-two.[2] Excellent as she was as the mother of a family, and in the social sphere, she was hopelessly incapable of ruling; and the country never recovered from the effect of the clause of Cosimo II.'s will which entailed upon it sixteen years of the rule of a woman utterly unfitted for such a task. When she died Tuscany had become almost more under the domination of the ecclesiastics than Rome itself; clerics of every kind and degree swarmed throughout the country; nearly every office was in their power; they treated the Grand Duke's officials with insolence, telling them that they would obey no laws and pay no taxes but such as had the

[1] Plate XLVII.

[2] She is buried in the family mausoleum. When her coffin was opened in 1857 "the body was found clothed in a dress of plain black cloth covered with a very large black veil, and completely wrapped in a black silk sheet. On the feet were shoes with immensely thick cork soles, two fingers thick. On the breast was a gold medallion with a triple chain, bearing on one side a portrait of her husband, Ferdinand I., and on the other her own portrait and name." (*Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum.* 1857.)

authority of the Pope; most of the property of the country was owned by monastic orders, and therefore exempt from taxation; there were over four thousand nuns in Florence alone; the people were crushed by taxation borne by only a portion of the population; trade and agriculture were languishing; and licentiousness, crime, and ferocity (going unpunished for lack of the strong hand), were rampant. The Inquisition held its gloomy court in the cloisters of Santa Croce, the most dreaded place in Florence, whither all who did not please the Jesuits were likely sooner or later to find themselves summoned. Torture, confiscations, and penalties, under the orders of the "Holy Office," became common things to the Florentines; and the dismal pomp of the horrible *Auto-da-fè* threw its lurid glare over that Piazza Santa Croce which once had shone with the joy and brightness of Lorenzo's and Giuliano's tournaments.

Nor even when Ferdinand came to rule independently was there at first much change in this latter respect. It was in the year 1641 that in the great hall of the refectory of Santa Croce there took place, in the presence of the Princes of the Blood, the nobility, and the whole of the Ministers and high officials of the Government, the celebrated trial of Pandolfo Ricasoli, a canon of the cathedral, and a man of much learning and respectability, who was accused (whether truly or falsely will never be known) of grave and scandalous immoralities; and he and one Faustina Mainardi, who was asserted to be his accomplice, after first doing penance in the Piazza Santa Croce "in garments painted with flames and devils," were condemned

to be walled up alive in one of the dungeons of Santa Croce; which sentence was carried out.[1] It is evident that Ferdinand had strong doubts whether the whole charge was not simply due to bitter animosity on the part of another ecclesiastic. He censured the latter for over-officiousness in the way he brought forward the accusation, and eventually effected his removal from Florence to Rome; thence, however, the same individual was shortly afterwards sent back to Florence promoted to the high office of head of the Inquisition in that city. The insult was one of many which Pope Urban VIII. contrived to give Ferdinand in revenge for the opposition which he had encountered from the Medici to his seizure of Urbino.

The Pitti Palace (3).

But though Ferdinand thus failed for a long time to exert any successful opposition to the dominant power of the Jesuits, in other directions he gradually brought about improvements, more especially as his brothers began to grow older and to assist him in public affairs. Moreover, finding it so difficult to bring about a satisfactory state of things in regard to the administration of the country so long as Urban VIII. was Pope, he turned his attention to other matters in which his abilities were better able to find scope. The family now consisted of Ferdinand and Vittoria (he being by this time thirty and she nineteen); Prince Giovanni Carlo,[2] now twenty-nine; Prince

[1] A melancholy reminiscence of this celebrated trial remains in the Pitti Gallery in the portrait of this Canon Pandolfo Ricasoli, painted with a devil whispering into his ear; this latter detail having been added to his portrait after this trial.

[2] The title of "Prince" and "Princess" had by this time become customary in the case of the younger members of the family.

Mattias, twenty-seven; the Princess Anna, twenty-four; and Prince Leopold, twenty-three. One sister and one brother were dead, while the third sister (Margherita) was Duchess of Parma. Under the influence of his young wife Vittoria the splendour of the court continued to increase, and in 1640 Ferdinand determined on a further enlargement of the Grand Ducal palace. The enlargement of the palace which Ferdinand now carried out again nearly doubled it in size. Cosimo II.'s additions had made the palace a large square block, three stories high, the façade towards the Via Romana having thirteen windows.[1] To this Ferdinand now added two more great wings (two stories high) in prolongation, each way, of the front portion of the palace, thus increasing the façade to its present length of twenty-three windows,[2] at the same time adding the buildings round the two inner court-yards. At the eastern end he constructed a corridor uniting that end of the palace with the *Passaggio*.[3]

These additions gave a magnificent range of state apartments on the first floor, consisting of about sixty rooms, the private apartments being chiefly on the upper floor. As soon as the additions to the palace were completed Ferdinand caused the whole of the apartments on the first floor to be splendidly decorated with ceiling-paintings by Piero Berretini da Cortona, Ciro Ferri, and other artists. The recent discoveries in astronomy made by Galileo were memorialised

[1] *See* plan (Appendix XIV.).

[2] *See* Plate LIII. The eastern end is that to the extreme left in the picture.

[3] *See* chap. xxiv. p. 294.

in these decorations, each of the new rooms being dedicated to one of the planets (or to such subjects as *Prometheus*, the *Iliad*, *Flora*, etc.), and Cortona's splendid ceiling-paintings being made to accord with the dedication.

Thus increased to its present size the Grand Ducal palace of Tuscany became a model which several other sovereigns endeavoured in after years to copy,[1] though without attaining the same result. Fergusson, speaking of it in his *History of Architecture*, says:—

"The façade is 460 feet in extent, three stories high in the centre, each story 40 feet in height, and the immense windows of each 24 feet apart from centre to centre: with such dimensions as these even a brick building would be grand; but when we add to this the boldest rustication all over the façade, and cornices of simple but bold outline, there is no palace in Europe to compare to it for grandeur."[2]

And Taine says:—

"Je doute qu'il y ait un palais plus monumental en Europe; je n'en ai vu qui laisse une impression si grandiose et si simple."

The palace which the Medici had built in 1430 in the Via Larga had surpassed all others of the fifteenth century; but no less did that which nine generations later they built at the foot of the Boboli hill surpass all royal palaces in Europe of the seventeenth century. Some idea of its dimensions is afforded by the fact that the central courtyard (round three sides of which the centre

[1] For instance in the case of the Royal Palace at Munich, and the Luxembourg Palace at Paris.

[2] *History of Architecture*, by Fergusson.

block of the palace is built) is exactly the size of the Strozzi palace in the Via Tornabuoni. It is sometimes said that this was done intentionally, in order to be able to say that the entire Strozzi palace could be placed in the central court of the palace of the Medici;[1] but whether it had any such intention or not, the fact helps us to realise the size of the palace built round this courtyard.

The palace is built directly upon the natural rock; in fact in one of the two inner courtyards the floor of the courtyard is the plain rock, lines having been cut on it to give it the appearance of being paved; and in the same courtyard are (in the walls of some of the ground-floor rooms) ornamental gratings by looking through which the virgin rock may be seen actually forming part of the outer walls of these rooms. Built on such foundations it is no wonder that the palace presents such an appearance of solidity.

The size and form of the building are not apparent in looking at it from the front,[2] because the two-storied portions added by Ferdinand II., projecting as these do far on either side of the centre block, hide the great wings which extend backwards at right angles to the front on both sides of the central courtyard. Owing to the unusual shape of the palace there is no point from which the whole form of it can be seen; so that from whichever side regarded it always looks

[1] With the usual curious suppression of the Medici, even in regard to the palace which they built, this supposed intention is always attributed, not to the Medici, but to Luca Pitti. It is unfortunate for this version of the story that the Strozzi palace *was not built until after Luca Pitti was dead.*

[2] *See* Plates LIII. and LXXIX.

smaller than it really is; and it is only by walking all round it, or traversing the interior, that its size can be appreciated. The latter is also more particularly dwarfed in the view of the front of the palace (Plate LIII.) owing to the fact that when looking at the building from that point the projecting corner of the upper story (*see* plan), while preventing the side wall of the centre block from being seen, also gives the impression that the upper story is only one room in depth; whereas there are more than fifty rooms on that story.

The interior arrangements of the palace remain at the present day very little different from what they were in the time of the Medici, notwithstanding that it has since been occupied by two other dynasties. The ground floor contains the Grand Ducal chapel, a labyrinth of large vaulted rooms accommodating various offices connected with the palace, and the three rooms (known collectively as the Treasure Room[1]) containing the gold plate and rare china for state occasions and many other valuable heirlooms of the Medici.[2] Beneath one of these halls on the ground floor is to be seen the large swimming bath which was constructed by Ferdinand II. at the last enlargement of the palace.[3] The Grand Ducal chapel remains as it was in the time of the Medici Grand Dukes; the

[1] The name does not refer to treasure in money and jewels, which were kept in the fortress of San Giorgio (chap. xxvi. p. 361).

[2] *See* chap. xxxi. p. 503 (*m*).

[3] Beneath each window on the ground floor along the façade is a large lion's head wearing the crown of Tuscany. From the mouth of the one nearest to the archway at the eastern end leading into the Boboli gardens issues a fountain of water, said to be the purest in Florence, which is brought all the way from the mountains near Pratolino (nine miles north of Fiesole), being carried over the river by a pipe laid over the Ponte Vecchio.

high altar, a mass of the finest and most costly kind of *pietra dura* work, was given to it by Cosimo III. The grotto under the terrace at the back of the central court (with marble Cupids swimming on the water of the fountain) has on its walls the arms of Vittoria della Rovere. Ascending to the first floor we find the eastern end of the former state apartments occupied by the picture gallery, in sixteen large rooms decorated with Cortona's beautiful ceiling-paintings, with, opening from the end of these rooms, the rest of the state apartments (twenty rooms) and the fifteen rooms which were occupied, until Florence ceased to be the capital, by the late King of Italy. The hall which in the time of the Medici Grand Dukes was their Throne Room[1] (situated in the original portion of the palace built by Cosimo I.) is entirely painted, both on the arched roof and walls, with frescoes, executed in the time of Ferdinand I., by Pocetti,[2] representing the founding of Leghorn, the battles of Ferdinand's army and navy with the Turks, the attack and capture of Bona from the Barbary pirates by the knights of Santo Stefano, and other deeds of Ferdinand I. and his father. In this hall is now placed the beautiful bronze statue, executed for Ferdinand I. by Gian da Bologna,[3] of the *Genius of the Medici*; also the costly ornamental cabinet presented to Anna Maria Ludovica by the city of Paris.[4] The rooms which were those of the Grand Duchess Vittoria della Rovere have on the ceiling-paintings her motto and family arms, the oak. In the rooms

[1] The present Throne Room is in another apartment.
[2] Died 1612. [3] Died 1608.
[4] Chap xxxi. p. 509 (footnote).

which were those of the Grand Duchess Marguerite Louise of Orleans (wife of Cosimo III.) are various pictures by French artists. In another room is to be seen the fine portrait which Paolo Veronese painted of the Grand Duke Francis I. And in various rooms are specimens of the finest work of the Tapestry Manufactory founded by Cosimo I., and of the Pietra Dura Manufactory founded by Ferdinand I. On the upper floor are, in the right wing the range of apartments occupied by the present King of Italy when in Florence (including the private ball-room and private dining-room), in the left wing the apartments set apart for guests of the court, and in the centre, facing the piazza in front of the palace, the private apartments formerly occupied by the Grand Dukes of Tuscany. These latter, the finest of the fifty rooms on the upper floor, have splendid goffered ceilings of the same description as those in the rooms of the Palazzo Vecchio which Cosimo I. had decorated for Eleonora di Toledo; and as this portion of the upper floor of the palace formed part of Cosimo's building it is probable that these rooms were thus decorated for her in the same way.

The views from the great windows of the first floor are very fine; but it is upon the upper floor that the best idea is gained of the size and height of the building and the extent of the views from it. Owing to the great height of the palace, and its position on a slight eminence, the views looking from the balcony[1] of the upper floor are splendid,

[1] Along the whole front of the building at the top of each of the three stories run stone balconies. They add much to the general effect in looking at it from below.

the eye being carried right over the city, and the view embracing the entire valley of the Arno and the mountains surrounding it. Similarly from the back of the palace on the same story an extensive view is afforded of the whole of the Boboli gardens, sloping up to the Fort of San Giorgio; while from the large centre window of the main portion of the building, as well as from the rooms at the ends of the two wings, sports and pastimes taking place in the amphitheatre situated in this part of the gardens could be as easily watched as if sitting in the amphitheatre.

Such was the palace in which the last three generations of the Medici passed their lives.

The Pietra Dura industry.

Ferdinand's reign witnessed a great activity in regard to the minor arts, and especially in regard to one of them. While at this time various sculptors, in particular Pietro and Ferdinando Tacca (the successors of Gian da Bologna), attained a certain excellence, "the last gleams of expiring genius," the chief direction to which the artistic talent of Florence at this period devoted its energies was that of the Florentine inlay-work, or *pietra dura* industry, which had been started by Ferdinand's grandfather, Ferdinand I. The reign of Ferdinand II. is notable as that in which this art made so great an advance that it became a speciality of Florence. This work was, however, so costly that only the purse of the Grand Duke could bear its expense; consequently almost all the efforts of the art were put forth in connection with the Royal Manufactory of Pietra Dura. The

erection of the mausoleum, to meet the requirements of which that manufactory had been started, was steadily proceeding, while the very best work which the manufactory could produce was being prepared for the *intarsiatura* work on the lower part of the walls.[1] In addition to this there was also a constant demand from the Grand Ducal palace, now that it had been so much enlarged, for inlaid tables, cabinets, and numerous other articles in this work.[2] Ferdinand took immense interest in this industry, fostering it to the utmost, and under him it reached its highest development. As a consequence other countries became eager to emulate Florence in this new art, and Florentine artists skilful in it were invited to France and other countries to introduce it there. The chief advance made at this time was in the production of half-tints and shadows, to obtain which search for suitable stones was made in the most distant parts of the world. Describing the difficulty of the art, Baldinucci says:—

"Whereas it is the aim of a good painter to mix and diffuse his colours so as to form an infinite number of half-tints, all differing essentially from the original colour, the artist in *commesso*[3] cannot multiply his material, nor melt one colour into another, but must adopt the stone as nature made it. In order to convey the colour by insensible gradations from the highest light to the deepest shadow, he must seek out the most delicate tints which nature has produced in stone and

[1] *See* chap. xxvi. p. 358.

[2] Many of these, all the property of Ferdinand or his brothers, are still to be seen in the Pitti and the Uffizi Galleries.

[3] The name given to this superior kind of mosaic.

observe the infinite number of shades discoverable in the hardest gems and other stones."

But though so difficult to execute, it is practically indestructible, and this caused it to be highly valued. The most skilful artist in this new form of the art was Luigi Siriès, a Frenchman, who settled at Florence, and was appointed by Ferdinand Director of the Royal Manufactory.[1]

Ferdinand's and Vittoria's first child, a son, to whom they gave the name of Cosimo, had been born in 1639, but only lived a week or two. Another child, a daughter, was born in 1641, but also only lived a short time.[2] In 1642, however, another son was born, to whom again the name of Cosimo was given, and who lived to succeed his father. This was followed by the marriage of Ferdinand's remaining sister, the Princess Anna, to her first cousin, Ferdinand Karl, the eldest son of her aunt Claudia,[3] he being sixteen and she twenty-six. In Anna's portrait by Sustermans,[4] taken when she was about twenty, her likeness to her brother Ferdinand[5] is very marked. Ferdinand Karl and Anna preferred the attractions of the splendid court of Tuscany to the mountains of Tyrol, and were more often at Florence than at Innsbruck. They had one daughter Claudia

[1] "The large tables in the Pitti Gallery with a porphyry ground-work, and with representations of shells and flowers delicately shaded, are all the work of Luigi and Carlo Siriès" (Horner).

[2] Her tombstone has on it in Latin the words, "You who read ask not my name. I was a little daughter of Ferdinand II., Grand Duke of Tuscany, and having entered this life and been duly baptized then gladly sought the heavenly life."

[3] *See* p. 397. Claudia died in 1648, after resigning the government of Tyrol to her son, Ferdinand Karl, in 1646.

[4] Plate LXXXVI. [5] *See* Plate LXXXII.

ANNA DE' MEDICI, DAUGHTER OF COSIMO II.
By Sustermans.

*Alinari*] [*Pitti Gallery.*

LORENZO, BROTHER OF COSIMO II.
*From an old Engraving.*

Felicitas,[1] born at Florence, who married the Emperor Leopold I.

During the next two years, while the Thirty Years' War continued to be waged with unabated energy in northern Europe,[2] and while England was becoming involved in civil war between Charles I. and his Parliament, Pope Urban VIII. kept Italy also in a continual ferment by his endeavours to seize upon various territories for his family, the Barberini. On his thus trying to take Castro and Ronciglione from the Duke of Parma, the latter marched his army through Tuscany into the territories of the Pope, who was greatly alarmed at this attack. Ferdinand was drawn into the quarrel, both to assist his brother-in-law and to defend his own state, but his military operations were feeble, and brought Tuscany no glory. In fact, the condition of the country was such that military strength was as impossible as satisfactory civil administration. The swarms of ecclesiastics who exercised a dominating power in every department of the national life, who grievously mismanaged everything they touched, and who acknowledged no authority but that of a Pope whose object was to obstruct the ruler of the country in every way, produced conditions which made military efficiency impossible. The domination of the country by an ecclesiastical hierarchy of this kind produced tribunals which were corrupt and arbitrary; it created monopolies, privileges, immunities from taxation, and vexatious,

[1] There is a portrait of Claudia Felicitas (in the character of Galla Placidia) in the Uffizi Gallery, holding a crucifix in her hand, and with a broken idol on the table before her.

[2] The Emperor Ferdinand II. died in 1637, and was succeeded by Ferdinand III. (1637-1658).

ill-advised laws, under which agriculture dwindled and trade threatened to expire; and it made the people in general completely poverty-stricken. It is remarkable that under such conditions no conspiracies should have arisen against Ferdinand's rule. We still see the old names appearing from time to time—Capponi, Rucellai, Acciajoli, Ridolfi, and others—families whose members had in former times been ever ready to head such revolts; but none ever seemed tempted to originate a revolt against Ferdinand. His officials were powerless, his troops contemptible, both Spain and France exceedingly cool towards him, and the Pope inimical; so that, except for one consideration, a revolt against his authority would have been easy to carry out. But the affection of the poorer classes of the people was too great to make a rebellion against him practicable, Ferdinand's goodness of heart, liberality, love of peace, and easy-going ways giving them a strong regard for him. Though the mismanagement of the country was palpable, and though the sufferings caused by its subjection to a crowd of insolent and tyrannical priests and monks were felt in every department of life, yet nevertheless the people liked Ferdinand. There must have been much that was good in a ruler who under such adverse conditions still retained the affection of his subjects.

At length in 1644 Tuscany was at last relieved from that which had formed its chief infliction for twenty-one years, by the death of Pope Urban VIII. He was succeeded by Innocent X. (1644-1655), and the new Pope adopted an entirely different attitude towards Ferdinand, showing

much friendliness towards him; and Tuscany soon felt the effect of this in an end being put to the evils due to ecclesiastical tyranny under which the country had so long groaned. As one outcome of this friendly feeling the new Pope made the eldest of Ferdinand's brothers, Prince Giovanni Carlo, a cardinal.

Lorenzo.

In 1648 the Thirty Years' War came to an end. And in the same year Ferdinand's uncle Lorenzo,[1] the third brother of Cosimo II., died at the age of forty-eight. His life had been spoilt, partly by his own fault, partly by circumstances. He had good talents, and was anxious to employ them for the advantage of his country, but from one cause or another had been prevented from doing so. Twenty years old when his brother, Cosimo II., died, and his only other brother, Carlo, being a cardinal and living always at Rome, Lorenzo had been anxious to take some part in the government of the country, but was not allowed by the two Grand Duchesses to do so. Foiled in this he tried to obtain a command in the Spanish army, but in this also was disappointed, as in consequence of his pressing Spain so persistently to take up his nephew's cause in the matter of Urbino, he fell into ill-favour at the Spanish court and was refused the military command which had been promised him. The result of these failures was that he drifted about, his life alternating between literary pursuits and all kinds of erratic diversions. Fond of learned men, he collected round him a sort of academy out

[1] Plate LXXXVII. His portrait shows a likeness to Charles II., the grandson of Lorenzo's first cousin, Marie de Medici.

of which he subsequently formed two societies which he called the "Inflamed" and the "Immovable," the latter of which, established in the Via della Pergola, eventually grew into the well-known theatre of that name. Among other peculiarities, he was in the habit of constantly taking all sorts of medicines, and eventually died from a dose of poison given him in mistake for medicine.[1] In the following year (1649) all Europe was horrified at the execution by the English of their King, Charles I. But the event created little stir in Tuscany, which had long ceased to have any commercial or political transactions with England, or to pay much attention to events taking place outside Italy.

Ferdinand II. was now a man of forty. In his fine portrait[2] by Sustermans (taken at about that age), though contriving to give himself with the aid of armour and other accessories a formidable appearance, this was no doubt with a view to hide his real disposition, which, as already noted, was kind, good-hearted, and weak. He wears a large cloak over his armour and the cross of Grand Master of the Order of Santo Stefano.

Vittoria della Rovere.

Vittoria della Rovere (whose portrait[3] by Sustermans shows her as she was at about five-and-twenty) proved a most unsatisfactory wife to Ferdinand, and was a dis-

[1] He is buried in the family mausoleum. When in 1857 his coffin was opened the body was found "dressed in clothes made in the Spanish fashion, with a doublet of violet-coloured velvet embroidered in gold, and a felt cap with plumes; on the boots were spurs of oxidised iron." A leaden plate fixed inside the coffin bore his name, and a long eulogy of some twenty lines detailing his many talents.

[2] Plate LXXXVIII. [3] Plate LXXXIX.

FERDINAND II.
By Sustermans.

*Alinari]* *Uffizi Gallery.*

VITTORIA DELLA ROVERE, WIFE OF FERDINAND II.

By Sustermans.

*Alinari*] [*Uffizi Gallery.*

appointment all through. She neither brought him the dowry of the Duchy of Urbino which had been the sole reason for his being betrothed to her as a boy of twelve, nor did she make up for being a portionless bride by any qualities in her own character. She was foolish, vain, ignorant, and utterly frivolous. As the result of her education in the seclusion of the convent of the Crocetta she was entirely ruled by the priests; while, having none of the tolerant spirit in matters of religion which Ferdinand and his brothers possessed, she was a constant cause of discord in the family. She also had a bad temper, and the strife which she created soon became so great that for many years she and her husband were entirely separated, living in different parts of the palace, and never seeing each other except when attending state functions; though this state of things, after continuing for about seventeen years, was brought to an end in 1659, when a reconciliation took place.

But the most lasting harm which Vittoria della Rovere did to the family fortunes was produced by the kind of education which she insisted on giving to her son Cosimo, who was brought up by her from a child with the sort of training more suited to one who was to become a monk than that required in the case of one who was to be the ruler of a state: with results altogether disastrous to himself and to Tuscany. Looking at the way that she was throughout his life a heavy drag upon her husband, hampering his best efforts and increasing that priestly domination which was ruining the country, at the still more fatal effect of her manner of training her son who was destined

to rule Tuscany for over half a century, and at the long period during which her pernicious influence was exercised, we may with justice say that if Giulio de' Medici was the evil genius of the earlier generations of the family, Vittoria della Rovere was the evil genius of its last three generations. For to her chiefly was due the despicable character of its decline and end. The portraits of Vittoria are numerous, as she delighted in being painted in various characters; her portrait by Sustermans, in the Pitti Gallery, as a Vestal Virgin, is one of the most notable; in another, also in the Pitti Gallery, she appears as the Blessed Virgin in a group of the Holy Family; and in another, in the Uffizi Gallery, as the Magdalen. Whilst Vittoria della Rovere was Grand Duchess the court was maintained with the utmost magnificence. She had a large number of maids-of-honour, chosen from all the noblest Florentine families, and the whole set of their portraits[1] is to be seen in the long corridor between the Pitti and Uffizi Galleries. Vittoria survived her husband twenty-three years, so that her baneful influence was prolonged also for nearly half the next reign.

Florence and Agra.

It is a far cry from Florence to Agra, from the puny court of the small and decaying state of Tuscany to the magnificent splendour of the court of the Great Mogul, the ruler over two hundred millions[2] of people,

[1] They are those in square frames at the northernmost end of the gallery. The set (more satisfactorily painted) in oval frames, nearer to the Pitti end of the gallery, are those of the maids-of-honour of the next Grand Duchess, during the reign of Cosimo III.

[2] The population of India now is three hundred millions.

and an empire the size of Europe. But even in the days of her decadence Florence, which once had led Europe in Learning and Art, was still able to make her influence reach even to such a far-off region as this, and to write her name in imperishable letters on the palaces of India.

Nowhere in all the world does the sunset of departed glory make us feel its pathos as in the long-silent marble halls of the palaces of Agra and Delhi. In them we are surrounded by the very spirit of Omar Khayyam's words:—

> "The palace that to heaven its columns threw
> And kings the forehead on its threshold drew,
> I saw the solitary ring-dove there,
> And 'coo, coo, coo,' she cried, and 'coo, coo, coo.'"

But there is something else there besides this. For there we may see, if we look closely, the first faint beginnings of the West to influence the East; the first evidence in India (after the time of Alexander the Great) of a Western hand and brain, guiding Eastern taste into a more perfect expression of its own spirit. It is written in letters of *lapis-lazuli*, topaz, jasper, ruby, and turquoise; and it is the hand of Florence that wrote it.

When we stand in the Diwàn-i-Am[1] of the palace at Delhi, where stood the Peacock Throne,[2]

[1] Public Audience Hall.

[2] The Peacock Throne was made by the Emperor Shahjehàn, and valued at £2,500,000. It was set with an enormous profusion of rubies, emeralds, topaz, and diamonds, and included two peacocks (the work of Austin de Bordeaux) made entirely of precious stones. It was eventually carried off by Nadir Shah when he invaded India in the eighteenth century. Bernier, the French physician, who saw it in 1663, wrote a long description of it.

the hall which has round its cornice in gold letters the celebrated inscription—

"Agar Firdous ba-ru-e zamin ust
To wuheen ust, wuheen ust";[1]

when we visit the beautiful Diwàn-i-Khàs[2] of the same palace, whose windows of delicate marble tracery look out over the blue waters of the Jumna; when we walk through the Diwàn-i-Khàs,[3] or the Khàs Mahàl,[4] or the Saman Boorj,[5] of the palace at Agra, or sit in the quiet garden on the bank of the river while before us rises that "dream in marble," the Tàj;[6] and when we see these beautiful white marble buildings of the Indian Saracenic[7] architecture decorated everywhere, round arch and pillar, doorway and window, with delicate floral tracery of jasper, agate, cornelian, blood-stone, *lapis-lazuli*, ruby, turquoise, and other

[1] "If there be an Elysium on earth,
It is this, it is this."

[2] Private Audience Hall.

[3] Of the *Diwàn-i-Khàs* at Agra, Bernard Taylor says:—"The three white pavilions overhanging the river are like precious caskets of marble, inlaid with precious stones and topped with golden domes. Balustrades of marble, wrought in open patterns of such rich design that they resemble fringes of lace, extend along the edge of the battlements. The Jumna washes the walls seventy feet below, and from the balconies the eye looks out upon the gardens and palm groves on the opposite bank, and on the Tàj, like a palace of ivory and crystal, about a mile down the stream."

[4] Private Apartments.

[5] Jasmine Tower.

[6] The Tàj, the tomb of Urjummund Bànu Begum, Shahjehàn's favourite wife, and in which he and she lie buried side by side, took twenty years to build, and its cost is variously estimated from £2,000,000 to £4,000,000 sterling for materials alone, nothing being paid for the labour except the food of the workmen.

[7] It is impossible to use any other word for this architecture than Saracenic; but except in so strong a resemblance, this style of architecture has no connection with that developed by the Saracen Turks. It was an entirely independent style developed by the Chaghtai Turks, whom we know as the Moguls. Its best name seems, therefore, "Indian Saracenic."

precious stones, the originals long since picked out of the marble by the sword and bayonet of plundering Mahratta, Jat, or Pathan invader, but replaced in imitation by the reverent care of later British conquerors; and when we afterwards see similar work in the inlaid tables of the Medici in Florence, or in their mausoleum, we are apt to imagine that Florence copied this art from far-away India. But it was not so. Each was independent of the other. But though the *munubbut-kàri*, or Indian inlay work of inserting designs in precious stones into pure white marble, existed long before it received any influence from the West, and came originally from Persia, the improvement in the designs which is visible in these palaces at Delhi and Agra received its inspiration from Florence.[1]

It was in 1627 that the fifth of the Mogul Emperors, the Emperor Shahjehàn, the great building Emperor, grandson of "the great and magnificent Akbàr,"[2] succeeded his father, the Emperor Jehàngir, and began that series of beautiful buildings, first at Delhi, and then at Agra, which made his reign of thirty years the culminating point of Mogul architecture. In 1629 his beloved wife, Urjummund Bànu (niece of the celebrated Nur Mahàl), died, and Shahjehàn determined that she should have the most splendid tomb ever erected over any woman. How well he carried out this determination has been attested by the world at large. It has been well said:—

[1] It is of course not the architecture of these buildings, but only their decoration, which is referred to as showing this influence; and this only to the extent mentioned.

[2] Moore.

"The Tàj is in harmony with that side of Eastern feeling which regards a white muslin tunic and an aigrette of diamonds as full dress for an emperor" (Keene).

"So light it seems," says Bernard Taylor, "so airy, so like a fabric of mist and dreams, with its great marble dome soaring up like a silvery bubble, that even after you have touched it and climbed it you may almost doubt its reality."

And it is in the Tàj[1] that we first see that change in the inlay work which denotes the influence of the Florentine *pietra dura* artists, a change still further developed afterwards in the inlay work ornamenting the palaces of Delhi and Agra. In 1648 Ferdinand, as a part of his endeavours to make the new industry at Florence still more perfect, sent Austin de Bordeaux, a Frenchman in his service who was one of the leading workers in the Royal Manufactory, with several other artificers, to the Emperor Shahjehàn[2] to procure certain *silices* only to be obtained in India. These Florentines while at the court of the Great Mogul suggested more artistic designs for the inlay work going on in the decoration of the new buildings at Delhi and Agra, introducing more delicate floral patterns; while Austin de Bordeaux, instead of returning to Florence, took service permanently under the Emperor Shahjehàn for this kind of work, being chiefly employed upon the ornamentation of the palace at Delhi and the construction of the Peacock Throne.[3] And from

[1] The architect of the Tàj was a Turk named Eesa Effendi.

[2] Ferdinand was probably placed in communication with the Mogul Emperor through the Augustinian monks in India.

[3] Austin de Bordeaux was eventually poisoned at Delhi by some of those who were jealous of his influence with the Emperor Shahjehàn

this time forth the inlay work at Delhi and Agra shows that resemblance which has been mentioned to the *pietra dura* work of Florence. Thus did Tuscany, even in her decay, still show power to influence other countries far beyond her own narrow boundaries, and left her sign-manual upon one of the most beautiful of the arts of India.

Mattias.

One of the best arrangements made by Ferdinand II. was the plan which he adopted about the middle of his reign of associating his three brothers with himself in the government of the country, and giving each of them one branch of State affairs to administer with almost complete authority, one controlling military affairs, one finance, and the third political affairs. Matters being well administered in each case, the arrangement was both popular and productive of much good to the country. Prince Mattias[1] commanded the army and had the management of all military affairs. He was a good soldier, and had seen much service in Germany during the Thirty Years' War, from whence he returned with a high reputation to command the army of Tuscany. In addition to this office he was also made Governor of Siena, where he became very popular, and was more often there than in Florence. His portrait by Sustermans in the Pitti Gallery shows him as he was towards the end of his life, which terminated at the age of fifty-four; he wears a blue scarf over his armour, and a large white collar in the fashion of the time, and holds in his hand the

[1] Plate XC.

baton denoting his office as Commander-in-Chief of the army.

Giovanni Carlo.

Cardinal Giovanni Carlo[1] had the control of financial affairs, which he managed well. On being created a cardinal by Innocent X. he had resided for some years at Rome, where after being employed by the Pope in various capacities he was at length sent to receive Queen Christina of Sweden, the daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, when in 1654 she renounced her throne in consequence of becoming a Roman Catholic, and came to settle in Rome. Innocent X., however, died in the following year, being succeeded by Alexander VII. (1655-1667), and the new Pope found that "the society of young prelates and Christina's attractions became so agreeable to all parties"[2] that he thought it desirable to appoint a cardinal of maturer years as Queen Christina's spiritual director, and requested Ferdinand to recall Giovanni Carlo to Florence, he being considered by the Pope too young and handsome for such an office. Like his younger brother Leopold, Giovanni Carlo was a great collector of pictures and other objects of art, and a keen assistant in every undertaking entered upon by Ferdinand to promote the advancement of Science, Literature, or Art. His fine portrait by Sustermans in the Lucca picture-gallery depicts him in his dress as a cardinal, and was taken when he was about thirty-three years old. He has the long hair and curls usually associated in our minds with the cavaliers of that period in England.

[1] Plate XCI. [2] Napier.

MATTIAS, THIRD SON OF COSIMO II

By Sustermans.

*Alinari*] [*Pitti Gallery.*

GIOVANNI CARLO, SECOND SON OF COSIMO II.
By Sustermans.

*Brogi*] [*Lucca Gallery.*

Leopold.

But the most capable of all the five brothers was the youngest, Prince Leopold,[1] who had the charge of political affairs, but whose talents and enthusiasm in the cause of Art and Science caused these latter subjects to be his principal sphere of activity. It is strange that this eminently capable man, who by his ability and energy produced such important and lasting effects for the renown of Florence, should have been consigned to almost complete oblivion. By most he is, if known at all, only known as the originator of the collection of portraits of the painters in the Uffizi Gallery. His important work of not only founding the celebrated scientific society of the "Cimento," but leading it during the whole of its brilliant career, has won for him no credit, his name even being scarcely mentioned in connection with that society. His valuable work in assisting the cause of Literature has been equally unrecognised. Above all, it is to Leopold that the world chiefly owes the two great picture-galleries of the Uffizi and the Pitti, of which Florence is so justly proud; and for this achievement alone his name deserves to be rescued from the obscurity into which it has been allowed to sink. He was a worthy successor of those earlier members of the family who had done so much for Learning and Art in the fifteenth century. And he was the last of this family who showed that exceptional ability for which it had for nearly three centuries been noted.

Leopold corresponded with all the leading men

[1] He did not become a cardinal until three years before the end of Ferdinand II.'s reign.

of science and professors of the fine arts throughout Europe; his critical taste and knowledge in all matters relating to Art and Literature were proverbial; while in Science he had not only been one of Galileo's chief pupils, but also his abilities and ardour in that study made him the natural leader of the band of men who had been influenced by Galileo's researches and were anxious to carry still further the scientific enquiries which the latter had inaugurated. The fine portrait of Leopold[1] depicts him in the dress of a cardinal, and was therefore painted towards the end of his life, as he did not become a cardinal until 1667, by which time he was fifty years of age. He holds in his hand one of the many letters on the subject of Art or Science which he was constantly receiving from his numerous correspondents scattered about Europe.

Ferdinand, who had the reputation of being the most cultured ruler of his time in Europe, took as keen an interest in all scientific, literary, and artistic matters as his brothers, Giovanni Carlo and Leopold. And these three Medici brothers, owing to their eagerness in this cause, and the influence which their position and wealth gave them, were at this period the leading men in Florence in all that pertained to Science, Literature, or Art.

Science. Ferdinand's gradual emancipation from the ecclesiastical domination which had so seriously marred the earlier part of his reign, begins to show itself about the time of the death of

[1] Plate XCII.

LEOPOLD, FIFTH SON OF COSIMO II.

*Brogi.* [*Uffizi Gallery.*

Galileo in 1642, about which time we see the initiation by Ferdinand of a movement, due to the seed sown by Galileo, which ere long had great results. Ferdinand and his brothers, who had all been pupils of Galileo, had been greatly impressed, not only by his teaching, but still more by the illogical character of the arguments used in condemning his theories, and they were profoundly anxious to initiate, in opposition to the theories of the scholastic philosophy, a system of deduction of truth from the observation of facts, and of dispersion of error by the force of experimental knowledge. As the first step in this direction, and as a preliminary attack on the tyranny over thought exercised by the ecclesiastics and on the false philosophy which they propounded, Ferdinand, when he was thirty-two, formed, about the time of Galileo's death, the *Conversazione Filosofica* of the Palace,[1] a society which, holding its meetings in the Grand Ducal palace itself, had for its members all the ablest literary and scientific men of the day, including such enlightened men as the celebrated Evangelista Torricelli da Modigliana, Niccolò Aggiunti, Famiano Michelini, Viviani,[2] Marsili, Uliva, and the renowned physician, philosopher, and poet, Francesco Redi. From the brilliant talents of those who formed its members this "Philosophical Society of the Palace" gained wide respect from all interested in literature and science.

[1] Thus this society was formed by Ferdinand even before Pope Urban VIII.'s death relieved him from the antagonism which that Pope showed to all such enquiries.

[2] Galileo after his condemnation was only allowed to have one pupil at a time, and Viviani was this pupil at the time of Galileo's death, being then about twenty years old.

The Cimento.

This, however, was but the preliminary step to one much greater. In the year 1657, when Ferdinand was forty-seven, there was formed under his patronage by his talented brother Prince Leopold the celebrated *Accademia del Cimento* (Academy of Experiment), *the first society for experiments in natural science ever formed in Europe*, and one which became the model for all those subsequently established in England, France, and other countries; and this new Academy held its first meeting on the 16th June 1657 in the Grand Ducal palace, presided over by its founder, Prince Leopold de' Medici, then forty years old. Truly the Pitti Palace, honoured as it is by all artists for its magnificent picture-gallery, should be no less honoured by all scientists as the building in which originated this notable event in the world of Science. The Royal Society of England was not incorporated until 1663, and the French Academy of Science not until 1666; so that Florence in this matter also, as in former days it had done in Learning, and as it had done in Art, led the way. And prominent as had been the leadership of the Medici as to Learning, and as to Art, in neither of these was it so directly marked as in this case of Science. Prince Leopold, both as an earnest pupil of Galileo, and on account of his own proficiency in science, was chosen by the new society as the proper man to lead it as its President.

And very ably he did so. At its first meeting the society ruled that its fundamental law should be that no special school of philosophy or system of science should be adopted by it, and that it

bound itself "to investigate nature by the pure light of experimental facts"; also that the society should be open to all talent, and that the privilege of selecting the experiments to be made should lie with the President. It adopted as its motto, *Provando e Riprovando.* Magalotti was chosen as its secretary; and on the walls of the entrance hall of the present National Library (in the Uffizi building) are to be seen the portraits of the distinguished men who were the first members of this famous society.[1]

Thus took place the first case on record of the formation of a society purely for the pursuit of inductive science, and for the furtherance of that new philosophy which Galileo had inaugurated and of which Bacon was to be the chief exponent. Ferdinand took the greatest interest in the work of the new society, and devised several of the experiments, among others the suggestion of the use of the expansion of liquids for thermometric purposes, instead of the air of Galileo's thermoscope. The results of the experiments made by this society were later on detailed by the secretary, Magalotti, and were published in Florence in 1667, under the title, "*Saggi di naturali esperienze fatte nell' Accademia del Cimento*" ("Results of experiments in natural science made by the Academy of the Cimento"); and a Latin translation of this work was published at Leyden in 1731 by Von Musschenbrock. Regarding these results of this society's work a scientist of our own day remarks:— "Many of these experiments are classics in the history of science."

[1] There is a second set of their portraits in a book of portraits in the Marucellian Library.

But Leopold was not only fitted to be the President of such a society through his scientific attainments. His gifts of character enabled him to guide smoothly a community of men of very diverse idiosyncrasies who, however talented they were as scientists, were no freer from the frailties of jealousy and envy, vanity and self-conceit, than commoner mortals. And his gifts in this direction received a remarkable testimony. The new society pursued an energetic and brilliant career for ten years. Then Leopold, his brother Giovanni Carlo having died, was made a cardinal in his place, and had to resign his presidency of the society. The removal of the guiding spirit which had known how to make all the members work together for a common object had immediate results which showed how considerable his gifts were in this respect, no less than in the scientific direction. For the society of the Cimento, which in its short career of ten years had won renown all over Europe, had a sudden and dramatic end.[1] Napier relates that upon Leopold's retirement from the leadership of the society, "the clashing pretensions of irascible genius burst forth, and blew the assembly to atoms; its fragments, still bright and precious, were eagerly gathered up by foreign nations, and made the corner-stones of steadier institutions."[2] *It was an epitome of all Florentine history.* Without the leadership of one particular family which alone of all the Tuscan race possessed a special gift for calming discord and inducing antagonistic natures to work harmoniously together,

[1] Magalotti, the secretary, when the society broke up became a member of the Royal Society of England, then just founded.

[2] Napier's *Florentine History*, vol. v. p. 486.

and whose possession of this valuable quality, demonstrated in many generations of this family for two hundred and fifty years, was here exhibited for the last time, internecine conflict ever robbed the talent and genius of the Florentine race of its crown and flower of success. None but a Medici could ever steer the bark of Florentine genius safe to port and keep it from wrecking itself upon the rock of fratricidal strife.

The Palatine Library.

Ferdinand and his brothers Giovanni Carlo and Leopold were no less active in the cause of Literature than in that of Science. By them was formed with diligent labour the "Palatine Library" (or Library of the Palace), which now forms the chief part[1] of the National Library of the Uffizi, and contains fourteen thousand manuscript books and over two hundred thousand printed books. The treasures of this library, though not so great as those of the older Medici library founded by Cosimo Pater Patriae, are still very considerable. It possesses over three hundred volumes of letters and papers of Galileo and his most distinguished contemporaries, including his celebrated *Discourses and Mathematical Demonstrations*, and his treatise called *The Dialogues* which brought upon him the wrath of Pope Urban VIII.; also an interesting letter from his favourite pupil Viviani, proving that Galileo was the first to apply the principle of the

[1] To it the Magliabecchian Library (chap. xxix.) was afterwards added, the two together forming the present National Library. But the Magliabecchian Library only added thirty thousand out of the total of two hundred thousand printed books, and none of the manuscript books.

pendulum to the clock. Among the illuminated books is a missal, once the property of the Emperor Otho III. (983-1002), with his name written in it; also another missal with very interesting medallions in enamel. A Bible which belonged to Savonarola has his comments written in the margin, and in so fine a hand that a magnifying-glass is required to decipher them. A scrap-book of Ghiberti's contains notes and sketches by himself and other artists of his time. The library also contains autograph letters of Boccaccio, Politian, Machiavelli, Michelangelo, Tasso, Alfieri, Redi, and many other celebrated men. Also a valuable manuscript edition of Petrarch's works; and a copy of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, written only fifty years after his death, and illustrated with very curious miniatures and a profile portrait of Dante himself. A copy of the *Anthologia* has a frontispiece of the most beautifully executed miniatures and small medallions, painted in 1499. A copy of the Pandects of Justinian, made by order of the Signoria when the original was removed to Rome by Leo X., has beautiful illuminations executed by Boccardini. The Latin Bible of St Jerome, in two volumes, has a miniature of him on the first page, and in the margins beautiful little drawings of landscapes with deer. Raymond Lulli's rare book on alchemy and magic has beautifully painted illustrations with charming landscape backgrounds. Another curious book is the *Miracles of the Madonna*, a very rare Portuguese work, with illustrations of an Eastern character. A fine copy of the Hebrew Bible, printed in 1488, is the first edition ever printed in that language. The poems of

Bellincioni, printed in 1493, another very rare work, has notes in the margin by the critical Accademia della Crusca. The Latin poem of the *Convenevole*, describing the corrupt state of religion in the fourteenth century, an exceedingly rare work owing to its censures against the Church causing it to be destroyed wherever possible, has curious miniatures in which the angels are represented behind walls with the swallow-tailed battlements of the Ghibelline party, while the people are behind square, Guelph, battlements. Another notable book is the *In tria Vergilii Opera Expositio*, by Servius, being the first book ever printed in Florence (1477); it was printed by the Florentine goldsmith Cennini, who cast his own type after seeing the results of printing in Germany, and on the title-page commemorates his invention. The first printed copy of Homer, printed on vellum, and presented by the editor, Bernardo Nerli, to Pietro the Unfortunate at the time of the latter's marriage in 1488, has in it a portrait in miniature of Pietro himself at the age of seventeen.[1] One of the first attempts at printing with movable types is a copy of Durando's *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, a work explaining the origin of the various ceremonies of the Church, which went through forty-eight editions. The copy of the *Divine Comedy*, with commentaries by Cristoforo Landino (bound in red and white leather ornamented with Landino's arms), which was presented by him to the Signoria in 1481, has fine miniatures, and among them a

[1] This portrait thoroughly corroborates that by Botticelli shown in Plate XXVII., as it is evidently the same face at a more youthful age.

portrait of Dante himself. The above give some idea of the many rare and interesting books contained in the splendid library which Ferdinand and his two brothers formed.

The Uffizi and Pitti Galleries.

But by far the most important memorial of the reign of Ferdinand II. was made in the domain of Art. Francis I. and Ferdinand I. had begun placing some of the family pictures in the rooms constructed by them over the offices of the Uffizi; but as yet there was nothing there which could be called a regular picture-gallery, while the rooms up to this time consisted only of a few opening from the eastern portion of the corridor. But in the latter part of Ferdinand II.'s reign, at the suggestion of Prince Leopold, the two brothers Giovanni Carlo and Leopold, both of whom possessed very large collections of pictures of their own (irrespective of those which were the general property of the family) besides numerous other objects of art, gave the whole of their collections to form the two galleries of the Pitti and the Uffizi, those belonging to Giovanni Carlo being chiefly made to form the gallery in the Grand Ducal palace itself[1] (the Pitti Gallery), and those belonging to Leopold to form the Uffizi Gallery. At the same time Ferdinand added to these the general collection of pictures which he had inherited as head of the family, as well as those which he had acquired from Urbino with his wife, Vittoria della Rovere.

[1] The official designation of the Pitti Gallery is still the "Galleria Palatina" (Gallery of the Palace), which name may be seen over several of the doors.

To house this great collection of pictures, to which many other objects of art were added by each of the brothers, not even the spacious Grand Ducal palace[1] could give sufficient accommodation, and it therefore became necessary to largely extend the gallery constructed over the offices of the Uffizi. This was nearly trebled in size, the corridor being extended all along the western side, and additional rooms being added on that side. Ferdinand also, among other objects of art, added the whole of the valuable collection of gems, rare vases, and other valuable articles now kept in the Gem Room, which was at the same time constructed for this purpose. Leopold not only originated the proposal for the formation of these two galleries and contributed the largest share of the pictures (other than those already belonging to the family), but he also conducted all the arrangements necessary to form the gallery of the Uffizi. At the same time he began the collection of the portraits of the painters of all nations, which now fills four rooms of that gallery. All the portraits of the oldest masters he obtained, some from the Academy of St Luke at Rome (among which was the portrait of Raphael), and others as the result of a long and careful search made by him throughout Italy for any portraits of them which could be found; and to these he added those of the chief

[1] Spacious as the Pitti Palace is it did not suffice in the reigns of the later Medici Grand Dukes, and the Palazzo della Crocetta, in the Via Colonna (which now contains the Egyptian, the Etruscan, and the Tapestry Museums) was maintained as a guest-house in which guests at the court were lodged when the Grand Ducal palace was too full to receive them.

painters of his own time.[1] Another important item in his contributions to the Uffizi Gallery was the valuable collection of drawings to be seen there, which took him many years to collect. Most of the pictures in the Venetian room he bought through a Florentine merchant, Paolo del Sera, who was settled at Venice.

The above action on the part of Ferdinand and his two brothers is the real formation of the Pitti and Uffizi Galleries as we now know them.[2] Prince Leopold's artistic possessions being much greater than those of his brother, Cardinal Giovanni Carlo, he did not restrict himself only to the Uffizi Gallery, and many of the objects of art to be seen in the Pitti Gallery were also given by him: notably the interesting collection of miniatures of important historical personages of his time made by him in the course of his travels through Europe, now in the "Corridor of the Columns,"[3] in the Pitti Gallery, which miniatures Leopold valued so highly that he used to carry them with him wherever he went. He also gave, among other articles of the kind, the rich *Stipo*, or cabinet of ebony, enclosing a small altar, and having its many doors and drawers inlaid with precious marbles and curious and beautiful designs in transparent stones, which stands in the centre of one of the

[1] Since then painters have considered it an honour to be asked to send their portraits to this gallery, so that the collection is steadily increasing.

[2] More pictures were afterwards added by Cosimo III., and later on also those obtained from churches pulled down; but the great bulk of the pictures in the Uffizi and Pitti Galleries still remain those collected there by Leopold and Giovanni Carlo and their brother Ferdinand II.

[3] So called from the two small pillars of Oriental alabaster placed in it.

rooms, and which after he became a cardinal he occasionally used when he celebrated Mass in the palace.

It was in this manner that the Uffizi and Pitti Galleries were formed. And it shows what the Medici were in the domain of Art, that they could, even in their decadence, form out of their private collections the two most important picture-galleries in Europe.[1] These two galleries, however, were not as yet public galleries, but simply, conjointly, the private picture-gallery of the Medici family. It was to remain for a later generation of that family to make them the property of Tuscany.[2]

This important work formed the occupation which during the last ten years of Ferdinand's reign chiefly engaged the attention of Leopold de' Medici. And it was fitting that this truly great man, of whom we never hear anything but what is good, and who wherever we meet with him is always engaged either in works of charity, or in some important work in the cause of Science, Literature, or Art, should be commemorated in that gallery whose formation was the last and greatest of his many enlightened labours. His statue[3] has fittingly been placed in the room in the Uffizi Gallery containing the portraits of the greatest masters of painting, where he sits surrounded by the portraits of those of whose works he was the largest and most appreciative collector

[1] Certainly as regards quality, if not also as regards number of pictures.

[2] Chap. xxxi. p. 501.

[3] Judging by his portrait (Plate XCII.), the statue does not do him justice.

ever known. Around him hang the portraits of Bellini, Perugino, Leonardo da Vinci, Filippino Lippi, Michelangelo, Giorgione, Titian, Raphael, Andrea del Sarto, Guercino, Tintoretto, Velazquez, Rembrandt, Van Dyck, and many another of "that glorious company."[1]

During the years 1649 - 1660 the Commonwealth was in power in England, and in the Pitti Gallery there is an interesting memento of this time. When the persecution of the Waldensian Protestants[2] was at its height, Oliver Cromwell sent a message to Pope Alexander VII. that if these cruelties were not promptly stopped he would send the English fleet into the Tiber to exact retribution; which message forthwith produced an order from the Pope to the Duke of Savoy to desist. Ferdinand was so struck with admiration of Cromwell's action that he sent a request to the latter that he would allow his portrait to be painted for him by Sir Peter Lely. Cromwell acquiesced, and added that he would himself present Ferdinand with it. And in due time the portrait of Oliver Cromwell, presented by him to Ferdinand, and painted by Sir Peter Lely, arrived, and was placed with Ferdinand's other pictures in the family gallery, where it still hangs.

Ferdinand during his reign initiated various experiments with the object of improving the agricultural and commercial prospects of the country, and one of these, though it did not produce the

[1] Written before the recent unfortunate alteration in the arrangement of the rooms containing the portraits of the painters (1910).

[2] The persecution which called forth Milton's well-known poem.

results he hoped, still survives, and is of considerable interest. This was his endeavour to introduce camels into Tuscany, as being hardier and less expensive to keep than horses. They were imported from India, and tried in various places in Tuscany. Unfortunately, however, it was found that the climate and conditions of the country did not suit them. Only at one place did they continue to thrive, namely, in the Grand Ducal park at San Rossore, about three miles from Pisa, where they may still be seen, the herd numbering about two hundred, and being employed chiefly in carrying wood.

In 1660[1] (the year that in England Charles II. regained his throne) a second son was born to Ferdinand and Vittoria, eighteen years after the birth of their eldest son, Cosimo. He was given the name of Francesco Maria. Though the evil effects of a monkish style of bringing-up were by this time making themselves strongly apparent in their eldest son, and though Ferdinand showed that he was fully aware of the error by spasmodic attempts to retrieve it, yet he allowed the same style of training to be given by the boy's mother to this second son, Ferdinand perhaps acquiescing for fear of again disturbing the comparative domestic peace which had, after so many years of discord, only so recently been established. In the case of Francesco Maria the effects were of less importance, as he was not called upon to rule, and was from the first intended for an ecclesiastical career.

[1] In the previous year Ferdinand sold the Medici Palace in the Via Larga to the Riccardi family.

In 1661 Cosimo, Ferdinand's eldest son, being now nineteen, arrangements for his marriage were taken in hand. Under the kind of bringing-up which he had received he had developed into a gloomy and disagreeable youth, sunk in bigotry and superstition, unmanly, awkward, hating all society, shunning as impious everything connected with science or philosophy, an enemy to all cheerfulness, detesting music, art, poetry, and the conversation of learned men, equally disliking all manly exercises, sullen and ill-tempered, and only at his ease in the society of friars and monks. Ferdinand thought to cure this by marriage; but while it was obvious that to find a wife suitable for such a youth would be a difficult task, if all Europe had been searched none more unsuitable could have been found than the one who was selected.

**Marguerite Louise of Orleans (1).**

The Princess Marguerite Louise of Orleans, then sixteen, daughter of Gaston, Duke of Orleans, and first cousin of Louis XIV. (who had succeeded Louis XIII. in 1643), had been brought up as the future Queen of France. She was lively, beautiful, clever, highly accomplished, full of French *espièglerie*, brilliant in conversation, fond of riding and hunting, detested all gravity and melancholy, and was, in short, the exact opposite of Cosimo in every particular. To crown all, she was deeply in love with the young Prince Charles of Lorraine,[1] to whom, when the plan of her marrying Louis XIV. fell through, she had hoped to

[1] There is a portrait of Prince Charles of Lorraine (at a later age) by Sustermans in the Uffizi Gallery.

be married. Her mother, the widowed Duchess of Orleans, wished it, and was opposed to her daughter being given to Prince Cosimo of Tuscany; but her children were left by Duke Gaston under the King's charge, the schemes of Cardinal Mazarin brought the King's authority to bear,[1] and the unhappy girl was given her choice of this marriage or a convent. After being married by proxy in the chapel of the Louvre in April 1661, she travelled to Marseilles, where she was met by Prince Mattias and escorted by him to Leghorn and thence to Florence, the whole journey from Leghorn to Florence being made a brilliant pageant, all that wealth and taste could devise being employed to give it splendour. But Marguerite Louise had left her heart behind her in France, and hated all things Italian. She was received at Florence with great festivities, the Palace was turned into a scene of enchantment, and every device was put forth to give her pleasure, but under the circumstances this was impossible; her broken heart, and the natural disgust which she felt for the monk-like and unattractive Cosimo, prevented her taking pleasure in anything; despair and a settled melancholy seized upon her, and every proposal for her entertainment was met only by bitter sarcasm. Shortly after the marriage Prince Charles of Lorraine paid a visit to Florence, which made matters worse, and after his departure Marguerite Louise no longer made any attempt to conceal her detestation of her position, of Florence, of

[1] Cardinal Mazarin died after the marriage had been settled upon, but before it had taken place; but this did not stop the marriage, as Marguerite Louise and her mother had at first hoped it might do.

the Tuscan court, and of everything in Italy. She refused to learn the Italian language, and sent urgent prayers to the King of France to be allowed to enter a convent rather than remain in Tuscany; and neither the endeavours of her father-in-law to assuage her misery, nor the threats of Louis XIV., nor the efforts of his Ministers to smooth matters, had any effect in producing a change in her conduct. There is an interesting relic still in Florence of these dead-and-gone troubles of the poor cruelly-treated bright French princess, Marguerite Louise. Some years ago two of the silver coins in the collection of coins in the Archæological Museum, which bore the head of Ferdinand II., were discovered to be hollow, and to be in reality boxes; and in one of these was a miniature of Prince Charles of Lorraine in his youth, believed to have been concealed in this manner by Marguerite Louise so that she might wear it without detection; which had been the cause of its becoming lost.

In January 1663 Cardinal Giovanni Carlo died at the age of fifty-two. His death was felt to be a great loss, both to the family and to the country, owing to his ability in public affairs, his varied talents, and his agreeable disposition.[1] In

[1] He is buried in the family mausoleum. When his coffin was opened in 1857 it was found perfectly undisturbed by any thieves, as also was the case with all those of the family who had been cardinals. "The body was dressed in the pontifical vestments, with an alb trimmed with rich lace, and a chasuble of cloth of gold and violet silk; on the head the mitre, and at the feet the cardinal's red hat; on the breast was a gold cross set with emeralds and rubies, and a rosary of blood-red jasper; by his side a staff covered with red velvet and having tassels of gold." A leaden plate at his head bore a long Latin inscription of twenty-eight lines, giving his name and detailing his great talents and many good qualities. (*Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum.* 1857.)

the following year hostilities threatened to break out between France and Pope Alexander VII. and to bring war into Tuscany, both sides having assembled their forces on her frontiers; but the dispute was at the last moment settled by a conference which was held at Pisa, presided over by Ferdinand, always at his best as a peacemaker.

Marguerite Louise (2).

But all international politics were thrown into the shade by the quarrels between Prince Cosimo and his young wife, which turned the Tuscan court upside down. A son (who was named Ferdinand) was born to this ill-assorted pair in August 1663, but the explosions and turmoils still went on. At one time Marguerite Louise, wishing herself dead, would neither eat anything nor speak to any one; at another she poured forth volumes of the most cutting ridicule on every one connected with the court, so that none dared go near her for fear of her biting and sarcastic wit. The Duc de Crécquy, Louis XIV.'s ambassador to the Pope, was ordered on his return journey from Rome to visit Florence and endeavour to bring the Princess Marguerite Louise to a better mind; but after a few days "he gave up the attempt in despair and returned to the less puzzling affairs of State policy." A second special ambassador sent from France met with like success. Then Madame du Deffant, who had been the governess of the Princess, was despatched on the same errand, and after a toilsome journey from Paris arrived at Florence armed with copious instructions from Louis XIV. as to the arguments she was to employ. But all were equally scorned by the young French princess who, brought up

to admire all that was bright and gay and noble in life, and in love with one who fulfilled these ideals, had been handed over to such a fate as marriage to the gloomy and contemptible Cosimo. The written threats of the King of France, the arguments of French ambassadors, the persuasive exhortations of her governess, even the authority of the Pope, were all alike powerless to make Marguerite Louise more ready to endure her lot. At length she could stand the court no longer and retreated to Poggio a Caiano, whence she sent a message to Cosimo that if he dared to come there he would have a missal thrown at his head. After a little time, however, she repented herself of this move, suddenly reappeared at the Palace, flung herself into her father-in-law's arms, and acknowledged herself in the wrong; and for a time the court had a little peace.

In June 1666 Ferdinand's uncle, Cardinal Carlo de' Medici, the last of Cosimo II.'s brothers,[1] died at the age of seventy-one. He had lived almost all his life at Rome, was Deacon of the Sacred College, and had long been a person of considerable importance at the Vatican. His body was brought to Florence, and buried in San Lorenzo.[2]

[1] *See* Appendix XII.

[2] He is buried in the family mausoleum. When in 1857 his coffin was opened, the body was found "vested as a cardinal in a crimson satin robe, with on the head his cardinal's mitre, and the red hat at his feet. On the breast was a handsome cross, which opened in the middle with a spring, and contained various relics; it was enamelled on the back in white, with the figure of the Redeemer in black, and on the front was set with five topaz and eight emeralds; this was a masterpiece of enamel work. On the finger of the right hand was a large episcopal ring with an oval-shaped emerald, and round the ring white enamel inside, and outside small green and red flowers. This also was an admirable piece of work." (*Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum.* 1857.)

In the following year Pope Alexander VII. died, and was succeeded by Clement IX. (1667-1670). Both the cardinals of the Medici family having died during the preceding four years the new Pope now made Prince Leopold, by this time fifty years old, a cardinal in the place of his brother, Giovanni Carlo. In this same year (1667) Ferdinand's brother, the successful soldier Mattias, died at the age of fifty-four at Siena, of which city he had for many years been Governor, and where he was much liked. He never married, and was thus the third of Ferdinand's brothers who had died leaving no children. His body was brought to Florence, and buried (like all those at this time) in the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo, waiting until the family mausoleum was sufficiently completed for them to be interred there.[1]

In the same year that Prince Leopold was made cardinal, and that Prince Mattias died, the quarrels between the Princess Marguerite Louise and the monkish and irritable youth to whom she had been married again developed into an open rupture. Sent to the family palace at Pisa, Marguerite Louise was kept there by Cosimo as a sort of prisoner, and prevented from holding any communication with the outside world. Finding

[1] He is buried in the family mausoleum. When in 1857 his coffin was opened, the body was found "clad in the great cloak of a Knight of Malta, and below this a doublet of black velvet, cloth breeches, and velvet boots laced with many ribbons. At his feet was his felt hat with a high crown and broad brim. Sewn on the breast of the doublet was a gold medallion, on which was on one side the effigy of Pope Clement IX., and on the other the Paschal Lamb and the Holy Spirit, with the words, *Ipse dominus possessio ejus.*" A leaden plate inside the coffin bore his name and titles, and stated that he was a general, and had won much distinction in the Thirty Years' War, and in the campaigns in Italy. (*Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum.* 1857.)

her circumstances becoming thus ever more intolerable, and that she could get no help from her relatives in France, she evolved the idea of escape from the contemptible Cosimo by joining a party of gipsies, with whom she was discovered one night settling all the arrangements from a window of the palace at Pisa; whereupon that mode of escape was made impossible. Soon afterwards her second child was born, a daughter, named Anna Maria Ludovica. The wild projects and immoderate behaviour into which Marguerite Louise was drawn have too often formed a subject merely for ridicule. They show to what depths of despair this once bright, clever, and accomplished girl had been reduced by the cruel policy of Louis XIV. and Cardinal Mazarin in forcing her to marry one so infinitely her inferior in abilities, knowledge, and every other quality; and her vagaries, laughable as they often were, should rather excite an intense pity, since (in one not by any means wanting in ability) they showed how deep was the misery which she suffered.

The aversion which Marguerite Louise entertained for Cosimo being so great, and travel being the best means for enlarging a mind so narrow as his, Ferdinand in 1667 very wisely sent the latter off to make an extended tour of various countries. It had, at any rate, the advantage of relieving Marguerite Louise of his presence for a considerable time, and during his absence we hear of no more of these vagaries on her part. In this tour Cosimo visited Germany, Holland, Spain, and Portugal; from thence endeavouring to reach

England, he was driven by a storm to Ireland, where "he was astounded at the wretched condition of the people, whom he found in far greater poverty and misery than those of Tuscany." From Ireland Cosimo travelled to London, and thence passing through France, returned to Florence in 1669 after an absence of two years. Ferdinand's health had for some time been failing; he only lived a few months after his son's return; and in May 1670 the fifth Grand Duke passed away at the age of sixty, and after a reign of fifty years during which the condition of Tuscany had been one long decline. In larger politics Ferdinand's sincere and successful endeavour to preserve peace in Italy was the distinguishing feature of his reign. He was buried with great pomp in a temporary grave in the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo pending the completion of the family mausoleum.[1]

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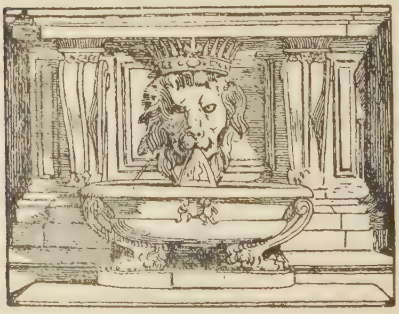
Ferdinand II. furnishes a strong illustration of the fact that the greatest crime of which one placed in any position of authority can be guilty is *weakness*; and that in a ruler neither immorality nor even ferocity produce such an amount of

[1] He is buried in the family mausoleum. When in 1857 his coffin was opened, the body was found "clothed in the great cloak of Grand Master of the Order of San Stefano, and under this a velvet coat ornamented with rich lace; at his feet a large hat with high crown and a broad brim; and at his right side a sceptre of gilded wood, his crown having been stolen. On the cloak and on the breast of the coat were fastened two gold medallions, both of them bearing on the front his portrait and name, and on the reverse the branch of a rose-tree with three roses, which was his special emblem, and the motto *Gratia obvia, ultio quaesita*. In his hand was a rosary, and to it was attached another small gold medallion with a representation of the Saviour on one side and of the Blessed Virgin on the other." Near his head was a leaden plate with a long inscription giving his name and titles, and detailing his deeds and virtues. (*Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum.* 1857.)

misery to others as this failing. Ferdinand's good qualities are patent in every period of his life; his kind and generous disposition, his unselfishness, desire to do good, love of peace, regard for religion, good abilities, and energy in the cause of Science and Art, all these are conspicuous; but they could not compensate for the one defect of weakness. Cosimo I., with all his murders, cruel tyrannies, and deceitful character, made Tuscany for the mass of the people a happy and prosperous country; Ferdinand II., with all his goodness of disposition and desire to do right, made it the most degraded and misgoverned country in Europe. And the root of these opposite results lay solely in the fact that the former was a strong ruler and the latter a weak one. But the full effect of Ferdinand's weakness was not seen till the next reign.



Lion's head fountain under one of the windows of the Pitti Palace, with water brought from Pratolino.

# CHAPTER XXIX

## COSIMO III.

*Born* 1642. (*Reigned* 1670-1723.) *Died* 1723.

To those who have watched the many illustrious achievements of this family during a course of nearly three hundred years it is deplorable indeed to witness the rapid descent to ignominy which now set in. Down the steep path from degradation to degradation go the Medici; and down with them, dragged at their chariot-wheels, goes Tuscany also. And could Lorenzo the Magnificent have stood again in Florence, he might have inverted the form of his speech and said: "*The State goes with the house.*" They rose—and fell—together. The death of all ability, the death of all high and generous sentiments, the death of all strength and force of character:—this is what is set before us in the fifty-three years' reign of Cosimo III. Great things are being done in other parts of Europe: the victories of the great Turenne; the victories of Marlborough—Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet; the spread of science, literature, and art in other countries; but Tuscany has no part in these things, and leads the way no more to anything but degeneracy and ruin.

Cosimo was twenty-eight years old when he succeeded to the throne. His character has already been noted. His travels had not produced any marked improvement in him, their chief effect having been only to give him an unbounded love of ostentation; with the result that the magnificence and luxury of his court far exceeded that of any previous reign.[1] For the first three years matters proceeded tranquilly; peace for a time prevailed between the Grand Duke and his wife, Marguerite Louise; the strong respect which Cosimo entertained for his uncle Leopold's opinion gave promise of wisdom and moderation in the government; while the birth in 1671 of a second son, who was named Giovanni Gastone, was welcomed as rendering more secure the continuance of the family.

But this satisfactory state of affairs did not last long. Cosimo's subordination to priestly influence, together with the constant interference of his foolish mother, Vittoria della Rovere, in all matters, after a time provoked the Grand Duchess Marguerite Louise[2] to demand, in 1674, a share in the government. This being refused, she withdrew to Poggio a Caiano, wrote thence to Cosimo, saying, "You make the unhappiness of my life, and I make the unhappiness of yours," and demanded a final separation and permission to return to France.

[1] The maids-of-honour of the Grand Duchess, chosen from all the first families of Florence, presented a numerous and imposing array. A complete series of their portraits is to be seen in the long corridor between the Pitti Palace and the Uffizi Gallery. They are those in *oval* frames in the portion of the corridor which adjoins the church of Sta. Felicità. There are twenty-five of them; and among them many faces of much beauty.

[2] Plate XCIII.

MARGUERITE LOUISE OF ORLEANS, WIFE OF COSIMO III.

*Burton*] [*Uffizi Gallery.*

To this Cosimo, afraid of the strong public opinion which existed in her favour, had to consent. Accordingly, delighted to be able at last to turn her back on the country which had been to her like a prison for thirteen years, Marguerite Louise left Tuscany for France, where she took up her abode at the convent of Montmartre, near Paris. This was followed by the death in 1675 of Cosimo's uncle, Cardinal Leopold, who died at the age of fifty-eight;[1] and with him departed all ability and common-sense in the conduct of affairs.

The Grand Duchess Vittoria, the field being thus left vacant, now gained the entire influence. And where she was paramount every folly was a certainty. Ferdinand II.'s ministers were replaced by others of her selection, chosen as a rule from the cloister—men so utterly without capacity or spirit that Magalotti compared them to little children frightened lest they should be sent back to school.[2] "Theology became a substitute for statesmanship," and in a short time universal contempt for Tuscany and its sovereign began to be the prevailing sentiment among other powers; while in home affairs one ill-advised measure after another followed in rapid succession. Meanwhile

[1] He is buried in the family mausoleum. When in 1857 his coffin was opened, the body was found "dressed in a purple chasuble, an alb adorned with rich lace, and a cope of violet-coloured silk richly embroidered with gold; on the head the scarlet cap, and at the feet the mitre and cardinal's hat. On the breast was a gold cross set with five amethysts; and on the finger a ring enamelled with flowers on a white ground and bearing a jacinth. In the hands was held a cross of ebony with a handsome crucifix of gilded silver." Behind the head was a leaden plate bearing his name and rank, with a long inscription in Latin describing his many attainments, his various works in the cause of Learning and Art, and his high character. (*Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum.* 1857.)

[2] Galluzi viii. ii.

Marguerite Louise was highly popular at the French court, where her lively sallies and constant ridicule of Cosimo and the Tuscan court greatly amused Louis XIV.[1] This made Cosimo furious, increasing his naturally bad temper almost to madness; he threatened to stop her allowance, but Louis XIV. forbade him to do so, and Cosimo stood far too much in awe of the French monarch to disobey.

The history of Cosimo III.'s long reign of over half a century is one of every evil which a ruler at once vain, weak, tyrannical, entirely wanting in brains, and sunk in superstition and bigotry can create. The record becomes wearisome by reason of the constant repetition of the same enormities and imbecilities, while the condition of the outraged people grew ever more deplorable. Cosimo was his own Minister of Justice. His avarice caused him to overtax his subjects, his bigotry to arraign them for offences outside the scope of all ordinary laws, his weak, yet tyrannical, disposition to inflict upon them punishments outrageous in their cruel severity. And these effects, when combined with the measures to which an earnest but mistaken view of religion led a foolish and superstitious character, produced results which made the condition of the people under the worst of Asiatic rulers more tolerable than that of the people of Tuscany under Cosimo III. Crime, poverty, cruel punishments, and priestly interference in every detail of domestic life reduced

[1] Several of Marguerite Louise's letters are to be seen in the Florentine archives.

the inhabitants to the last stage of wretchedness.[1] Cosimo considered it his mission to dragoon his subjects into morality, and his methods in this particular created untold misery. The most ferocious punishments were daily meted out for the smallest offences, or supposed offences, against morality. "The chain and the lash were in constant requisition." The periodical visits of a Dominican friar who made minute examination into all family matters, and by the royal authority commanded marriages, separations, or imprisonment, destroyed all possibility of domestic happiness. "Dissimulation spread like a pestilence; priests and hypocrisy pervaded all."[2] Marriage portions given to girls recommended by ecclesiastics, pensions given to crowds of so-called "converts," a crushing taxation, laws conceived in entire ignorance of all commercial or agricultural affairs, outrageous punishments for trivial offences, these and similar measures caused many of the inhabitants to take flight from the country; while those who remained became idle, false, and bigoted. Thus did Cosimo's early training, habits, and disposition reduce a high-spirited and intellectual people to the most abject state of moral and material degradation ever known.

One of the worst features in Cosimo was his dislike of his sons, whom in the most ill-advised manner he persistently bullied. Both of them had good natural dispositions and abilities, but both were in turn ruined through the treatment

[1] One of Cosimo's most hated measures was his causing executions to be carried out in the public streets, in order to terrify the people, which struck them with horror.

[2] Galluzi viii. ii.

they sustained from their father; and this in the end brought about the most disastrous consequences to the family. A mixture of extravagance and niggardliness, he kept a tight hold on his purse-strings where his sons were concerned, employing this means of coercing them to his will.

Prince Ferdinand.

Prince Ferdinand, the heir to the throne, had as his instructors, Viviani, Redi, Noris, the brothers Lorenzini, and other distinguished men of the time, and being full of talent and intelligence promised to offer a striking contrast to his father whenever he should be called upon to rule. By the year 1680, when he was seventeen, this young Prince began to find the follies of the Grand Duchess Vittoria insupportable, and to revolt more and more from her authority. He was prohibited by Cosimo from corresponding with his mother, whose extravagant conduct in Paris continued, and who openly declared her intention whenever Cosimo's intemperance brought his life to an end, of going to Florence, "chasing hypocrites and hypocrisy from the court," discharging all the incompetent sycophants who had been promoted by the Grand Duchess Vittoria, and restoring good government and common-sense. Ferdinand espoused his mother's side in the quarrel, disregarded the prohibition against corresponding with her, and when his instructors, the brothers Lorenzini, were most cruelly consigned to permanent imprisonment in the dungeons of Volterra for supporting him, threw off his father's authority altogether,

and became the centre of a band of well-born young men whose avowed object was to assert themselves in opposition to the monastical atmosphere of the court, to favour music, art, and literature, and to contend against all hypocrisy and dissimulation. This society became immensely popular, all the young scions of the leading Florentine families pressing to join it in their detestation of the rule of the ecclesiastics favoured by Cosimo and his mother; while the society was soon still further strengthened by being joined by Cosimo's younger brother, Francesco Maria, who was only three years older than his nephew Ferdinand. On his uncle Leopold's death Francesco Maria had been made a cardinal at the age of fifteen, but had no taste for the ecclesiastical life. Thus the family was divided into two parties, on the one side the bigoted Cosimo and his still more bigoted mother Vittoria, and on the other his brother Francesco Maria and eldest son Ferdinand, with the Grand Duchess Marguerite Louise watching from a distance and encouraging the latter party.

But the concourse of youthful spirits led by Prince Ferdinand soon, in their revolt from hypocrisy and a monkish style of life, went further than merely favouring music, art, and literature, and developed a taste for pleasure and intemperance which nullified all their good intentions and gave Cosimo an opportunity for applying a thoroughly characteristic remedy. A rigorous family inspection, with a searching investigation into every detail of private habits, was instituted, carried out by friars; and this developed into

a regular system of *espionage* and persecution, which soon put down any tendency to gaiety and pleasure, and made the opponents of dissimulation and hypocrisy themselves practise these means of evading ecclesiastical tyranny. All classes were subjected to this system; while at the same time monks were placed over the parish priests, and kept the people perpetually employed in "processions, preachings, and penances"; accusations multiplied, while pardon for imaginary offences was only to be obtained by the payment of large sums of money to the ecclesiastics.

Disgusted with this state of things, Prince Ferdinand, being now twenty-two, desired to be allowed to proceed on a tour to see the world; but was kept for two years before Cosimo would agree to let him go. In 1687, however, Ferdinand was allowed to depart on a tour in northern Italy, after being first betrothed to the Princess Violante Beatrice of Bavaria. In November 1688 he returned, and the marriage was carried out with a most gorgeous display of magnificence. A special gate was opened in the wall of the city near the Porta San Gallo, and through this the Princess Violante was drawn, in a car profusely studded with gems, to a chapel erected for the occasion; there she was crowned by Cosimo with the Grand Ducal crown, and thence was conducted to the Palace in a procession of the most extravagant splendour; after which the marriage was performed in the cathedral.[1]

[1] It was on this occasion that, in order to make space for an increased number of singers, Luca della Robbia's and Donatello's reliefs of the *Cantorie* were removed from the two organ-lofts, and have never since been replaced in the position for which they were designed.

Prince Ferdinand[1] was the hope of all those who desired to see a better state of things dawn upon Tuscany. High-spirited, full of ability, and fond of art and science, he had become the centre round whom gathered all who were learned[2] and cultured, and all that portion of Florentine society which had no taste for the atmosphere of hypocrisy which pervaded the court. But his father contrived to bring these bright prospects to ruin. Ferdinand was as energetic and resolute as his father was weak and undecided, and being eager to employ his abilities to some useful purpose, desired to take a part in public affairs; but Cosimo refused to permit him to do so. Disgusted at a fatuous style of government which was dragging the country to ruin, forced to be the daily witness of errors and follies which he was not allowed to remedy, and subjected to chronic bullying by a father who hated him, Ferdinand gradually took to a dissolute course of life which before he was forty ruined his health, and brought about his death a few years later. Unfortunately he did not care for the wife whom his father had chosen for him, the Princess Violante, though she was in every way worthy of his affection, and deservedly liked by all classes in Florence. She never reproached him for his neglect, and to the last continued to show her affection for him.[3]

[1] Plate XCIV. He wears his own hair, but in the mode of curling it we are able to trace the transition from the long locks of the cavaliers to the wig, which was already coming into vogue.

[2] One of the learned men of the time, Francesco Marucelli, who had collected about twelve thousand books, founded the present Marucelliana Library, bequeathing it at his death in 1703 to the city of Florence. Another passionate lover of books, Antonio Magliabecchi, who was librarian of the Palatine Library, collected about thirty thousand books which at his death in 1714 he likewise bequeathed to his native city (chap. xxviii. p. 441, footnote).

[3] *See* page 479 (footnote).

Art. In the early part of Cosimo's reign various important additions were made to the art collections in the Uffizi Gallery. Cosimo's intemperance both in eating and drinking caused him to suffer from frequent illness, as a remedy for which his physician, the celebrated Redi,[1] prescribed regular walking exercise; and Paolo Falconieri, one of the cultured men whom Prince Ferdinand had gathered round him, suggested that this exercise should be taken in the Uffizi Gallery, and that the Grand Duke should for his amusement adorn it with all the best specimens of sculpture belonging to the family. Cosimo took up the idea warmly, removed to the gallery many of the statues hitherto placed in the Boboli gardens, and caused to be brought from the Villa Medici at Rome most of the remaining works of sculpture which Ferdinand I. had collected, including the *Venus de' Medici*, the *Wrestlers*, the *Knife-whetter*, and the large number of classic busts and other works of sculpture to be seen in the Uffizi Gallery, then called the Gallery of the Statues.[2] The long corridor between the Palace and the Uffizi Gallery, which formed part of this daily walk of the Grand Duke, was also adorned with many pictures, among them the large collection of over six

[1] Francesco Redi was celebrated as the first physician of his day, as a writer on Natural History, and as a poet. He foreshadowed many of the modern discoveries of bacteriology and the means of obtaining immunity from various diseases by inoculation. He founded the Florentine Museum of Natural History. His poem *Bacco in Toscana* has obtained a wide celebrity. His renown in medical science has caused his statue to be placed in the Uffizi colonnade.

[2] For some reason the group of *Niobe and her Children*, and the *Apollino*, were still left in the Villa Medici at Rome, and were not brought thence and placed with the rest of the Medicean art possessions until 1772, under the Austrian Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo.

PRINCE FERDINAND, ELDEST SON OF COSIMO III.
Marble bust.

*Brogi*] [*Naples Gallery.*

ANNA MARIA LUDOVICA, DAUGHTER OF COSIMO III., ELECTRESS PALATINE.

By Adrian Van der Werff.

*Hanfstaengl*] [*Munich Gallery.*

hundred portraits of notable persons in Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which, though they are of no artistic merit, are of much value from an historical point of view.

**Bodies transferred to the Mausoleum.**

Cosimo also now took in hand an important matter in regard to the family mausoleum. Hitherto the numerous members of the family who had died since it was begun by his great-grandfather Ferdinand I. in 1604 had, pending the completion of the mausoleum, been buried temporarily in the New Sacristy. Migliore, writing in 1684, in describing the New Sacristy, says:—

"This chapel also serves for burying the bodies of the Grand Dukes and Princes of the Blood, placed in the ground beneath, with short inscriptions merely for record, and not in the form of elegant eulogy such as they merit and their grandeur would require, pending their being transferred to the mausoleum which is being prepared immediately behind the choir of the church."[1]

He also states that in the Old Sacristy were buried the bodies of Maria Salviati, and Cosimo I. with his sons Giovanni and Garzia. Thus in the New Sacristy there had been temporarily buried in this manner some eighteen members of the family, viz., Francis I. and his wife Joanna, with two of their children, Anna and Filippo; Ferdinand I. and his wife Christine, with five of their children, Francesco, Carlo, Lorenzo, Eleonora, and Caterina;

[1] *Firenze Città Nobilissima,* by Ferdinando Leopoldo del Migliore (1684).

Cosimo II. and Maria Maddalena, with four of their children, Maria Cristina, Giovanni Carlo, Mattias, and Leopold; and Ferdinand II. By the year 1685, however, the mausoleum, though still only about half finished, was sufficiently advanced for them to be interred there; Cosimo, therefore, now removed the bodies of all the above from their temporary resting-places to the mausoleum. The remains of Giovanni delle Bande Nere being at the same time brought from Mantua, all were duly placed in the crypt, those of Giovanni delle Bande Nere and his wife Maria Salviati in the centre, and the whole of their descendants ranged round them.[1]

Before the middle of Cosimo's reign was reached his imbecile method of government had begun to produce serious difficulties. In the disturbed state of Europe[2] it was urgently necessary that the country should be placed in a proper state of defence; but all military requirements had been

[1] Chap. xxxii. p. 517.

[2] Louis XIV. at this period dominated all European politics, and the principal events of this portion of his stirring reign were—

| | |
|---|---|
| War with Holland | 1672. |
| Victories of Turenne | 1674-1675. |
| Peace of Nymwegen | 1678. |
| Occupation of Luxembourg | 1682. |
| Revocation of the Edict of Nantes | 1685. |
| Devastation of the Palatinate | 1688. |
| Victories of Marshal Luxembourg | 1690-1693. |
| Peace of Ryswyck | 1697. |
| War of the Spanish Succession | 1701. |
| Victories of Vendôme and Tallard | 1702-1703. |
| Battle of Blenheim | 1704. |
| „ Ramillies | 1706. |
| „ Oudenarde | 1708. |
| „ Malplaquet | 1709. |
| Peace of Utrecht | 1714. |
| Death of Louis XIV. | 1715. |

ignored by Cosimo's cloister-trained Ministers of State, and no money for this purpose was forthcoming. Vast sums were squandered on religious ceremonies, votive offerings, the foundation of convents, and similar objects, while gold was lavishly poured forth on the crowd of monkish satellites who surrounded Cosimo and his mother, and on the spies who infested every family circle; and this inordinate expenditure on such purposes while the military defences of the country were allowed to go to ruin caused general exasperation. Public opinion loudly complained of this insane policy, and was led by Prince Ferdinand, who openly condemned his father's conduct, and was backed by public applause which kept Cosimo in continual fear of a revolution.

Princess Anna Maria Ludovica.

In 1691 the Princess Anna Maria Ludovica,[1] then twenty-four, the only one of his three children for whom Cosimo had any affection, was married to William, Elector Palatine. At the same time Cosimo was granted by the Emperor the title of "Royal Highness."[2] But the condition of the country allowed him small opportunity for satisfaction at these new honours. The people rose and surrounded the Royal Palace clamouring for bread; the provinces were almost depopulated; and savage bands of marauders roamed over the country in search of a livelihood unobtainable by any other means. Tuscany appeared to be sinking into general anarchy. Fortunately, however, in 1693

[1] Plate XCV.

[2] Hence the alteration in the shape of the crown of Tuscany from that worn by previous Grand Dukes; *vide* Plates XCIII. and XCVII.

the Grand Duchess Vittoria, who had for nearly sixty years been the constant cause of discord to the family and ruin to the country, died at Pisa at the age of seventy-two;[1] and this, by removing the chief influence which had led Cosimo into methods which made all satisfactory government impossible, produced some amelioration in the conditions from which the country was suffering.

Prince Giovanni Gastone.

Cosimo's second son, known as Gian Gastone, was by this time twenty-two. He was good-looking and highly educated, having the reputation of being the most cultured prince of his time, and being specially devoted to science, antiquarian studies, and botany.[2] It was considered a special proof of his exceptional attainments that among various other languages he even knew English. But unlike his brother Ferdinand he preferred a retired and studious life in company with the distinguished Cardinal Noris,[3] who had been his tutor. His active-minded brother Ferdinand consequently despised him; while his father Cosimo disliked him exceedingly, and with his propensity for always taking the most ill-advised course, gave him a very restricted allowance

[1] She is buried in the crypt of the family mausoleum. When in 1857 her coffin was opened, the body was found "clothed in a handsome dress of black silk, ornamented with black and white lace at the neck, on the sleeves, and at the hem of the skirt. On the breast was a large gold medallion, having on one side her likeness and name, and on the other her crest, the birth of the pearl, that is, Oceanus, Tritons, and Galatea, who holds in her hand an open shell, with the motto *Dos in candore.*" A parchment enclosed in a leaden tube bore her name and titles, and a long and fulsome eulogy, ascribing to her all possible virtues.

[2] The small circular building in a retired part of the Boboli gardens was built as a studio for Gian Gastone.

[3] Afterwards chief Librarian of the Vatican Library.

and ignored him on all occasions, with the result that Gian Gastone lived neglected by the court, being without the means to share in social dissipations. Gian Gastone, however, cared little for being thus isolated from the life of society so long as he was left to pursue his studies in peace. He had a good disposition, loved a country life, was free from any feelings of ambition, and with the learned cardinal for his companion wanted no other society, and had no other desire than to live this kind of life permanently.

But Cosimo, who by his senseless method of treatment had already driven one son into reckless and dissolute courses, now proceeded to do the same with the other. It was no doubt desirable that Gian Gastone should marry, and that he should be induced to lead a less retired life; but Cosimo's methods for attaining these objects were the worst that could have been employed. Fired with the idea of planting a branch of the Medici in Germany, Cosimo arranged, through his daughter the Electress Palatine, when Gian Gastone was twenty-four, that the latter should be married to Anne of Saxe-Lauenburg, daughter of the deceased Duke of Saxe-Lauenburg (who had left no son), and widow of the Count Palatine, Philip of Neuberg, "a lady of enormous weight, immense self-will, and no personal attractions."[1] She was coarse and unintellectual, was "more like a Bohemian peasant than a princess," cared only for field sports (which Gian Gastone detested), and considered her small patrimony of Reichstadt, a

[1] Letters of Horace Mann, English Ambassador at the court of Tuscany.

petty village in a secluded part of the mountains in Bohemia, the only place in the world worth living in. Gian Gastone strongly objected to the wife thus chosen for him, who was about as unsuitable to a man of his tastes as could have been found; but Cosimo would not listen to his protests, and after making him accompany him to Loreto to make numerous votive offerings, despatched him to Dusseldorf (the seat of the Elector Palatine), where in July 1697 the marriage was performed; after which Gian Gastone and his uncongenial consort proceeded to the remote Bohemian village which was in future to be his abode.

Arrived there, Gian Gastone found himself condemned to live in a small and mean castle in the midst of a village, without any intellectual society, with a wife altogether his inferior, in a country which was buried deep in snow for half the year, and where during the other half there was nothing to do but shoot. His wife cared only about horses and dogs, and spent most of her time "holding conversations in the stables"; she was capricious, hysterical, imperious, brainless, and apt to burst out suddenly in wrath or in tears, and her character and manners had after three years' experience caused her former husband to take to drink. Gian Gastone writes to his father that she "is nothing more than a contadina." Placed in such conditions, and saddled with a coarse and ill-favoured wife who offended his tastes at every turn, Gian Gastone stood it for a year and then fled to join his mother in Paris. Thence he was forced by Cosimo to return to his hated domicile in

Bohemia; but the various miseries of his existence there began ere long to produce in him a settled melancholy. "Nevertheless from time to time Gian Gastone's keen and witty Tuscan spirit caused him to treat facetiously even the dismal circumstances in which he found himself,"[1] and his letters to his father[2] occasionally describe the untoward conditions of his life with considerable humour. After a time he tried to induce his wife to come with him for the winter to Prague, but she utterly declined to quit Reichstadt, and flew into a passion whenever the subject was mentioned; and at length the constant quarrels with the vulgar and unrefined woman to whom he had been united, the inclement climate, and disgust at his surroundings drove Gian Gastone to remove to Prague, where he took to low society, intemperance, and a generally dissolute life. And henceforth he was more often at Prague than at Reichstadt.

By this time Cosimo (whose errors were all caused by egregious vanity and want of wisdom rather than by deliberately malevolent intentions) began to perceive the mistake he had made; and seeing that his elder son's health was failing, and that Gian Gastone would probably become ere long the heir to the throne, desired that he should return to Tuscany. But as he would not agree to Gian Gastone doing so by himself, he turned all his efforts to induce Anne of Saxe-Lauenburg to come, at all events for a time, to Tuscany. Every power was brought to bear to effect this, and the struggle continued for eight years without

[1] *Gli ultimi dei Medici*, by Emilio Robiony (1905).

[2] All Gian Gastone's letters to his father Cosimo are preserved in the Florentine archives.

avail; urgent letters from Cosimo to Anne herself, the authority of her relative the Elector Palatine (who visited Reichstadt in person with this object), even the commands of the Pope, all were equally powerless to remove Anne of Saxe-Lauenburg from Reichstadt.[1] Eventually in 1708 Cosimo gave it up as hopeless, and wrote to Gian Gastone to return to Florence leaving her behind.[2] This Gian Gastone did, and henceforth they lived apart.

In 1705 Prince Ferdinand's health began to decline; and as he and the Princess Violante had no children, while the same was the case as regarded Gian Gastone and his wife Anne, the question of the succession began to be of primary importance in the affairs of Tuscany. Cosimo, therefore, in 1709 compelled his brother Francesco Maria, who was now nearly fifty, to resign his cardinal's rank and to marry Eleonora Gonzaga, the young daughter of the Duke of Guastella; but though they went through the marriage ceremony they separated at once, and Francesco died in the following year leaving no children.[3]

In view of the large families of three successive generations it is remarkable that the Medici should have died out as they did. Cosimo I. had eight children (five sons and three daughters); in the next generation Ferdinand I. had also eight

[1] The numerous letters on this subject which passed during the years 1698-1708 are to be seen in the Florentine archives.

[2] Cosimo's letter says that evidently his own sins have prevented his obtaining his desire in this matter.

[3] He is buried in the crypt of the family mausoleum. He was probably buried wearing many jewels, for when in 1857 his coffin was opened it was found to have been entirely ransacked by thieves, nothing remaining except the skeleton, the shoes with gold buckles, and a long Latin inscription inside the coffin giving his name and titles and a fulsome eulogy on his character.

children (four sons and four daughters); and in the next generation Cosimo II. had again eight children (five sons and three daughters). Yet from one cause or another descendants failed to such an extent that in the fifth generation from Cosimo I. the family entirely died out.[1]

For nearly twenty years the wars between France, Spain, and Austria had threatened the independence of Tuscany. That state under Cosimo's clerical administrators had become ready to be the prey of whoever marched an army into its territory. All the strength it had possessed under Cosimo I. and Ferdinand I. had departed. Forts had been allowed to fall into disrepair, and their armaments to become obsolete; the fleet had disappeared; the army was contemptible, wanting in men, arms, and equipment. Cosimo had only maintained Tuscany's independence in the midst of these wars by the usual resource of a weak state, that of siding first with one and then with another of the combatants according to whichever at the moment was the strongest. Their armies had frequently invaded Lombardy, and Tuscany would have been similarly overrun had it not been that each of the three powers was determined to prevent the central state in Italy from becoming the property of either of the others.

These conditions were now intensified by its becoming apparent that at no distant date there would remain no descendant of the Medici family to occupy the Tuscan throne, none of Cosimo's three children having any children. Therefore,

[1] *See* Appendix I., and Appendices XII. and XIII.

between the various powers who all cast greedy eyes upon the most important state in Italy there now began a political contest, which lasted for the next thirty years, as to which of them should become the possessor of Tuscany when that throne should be vacant, "the European monarchs watching like wreckers the last moments of the foundering Medici."[1] Meanwhile Cosimo protested furiously against any such question being debated, declaring it to be his right to nominate a successor to the throne after the demise of his sons; and that even if this were disallowed the position reverted to that which had existed before Cosimo I. created that throne, the right to say by whom they would be governed reverting to the Tuscan people.

In 1712 there was assembled the Congress of Utrecht, in which almost every state in Europe took part, and at which each had some claim to urge as a portion of the terms of any general peace which might be effected. At this congress Cosimo's right to nominate a successor to the throne of Tuscany on the death of his second son was practically acknowledged by the powers. Although not a final settlement of the question, it was a matter of common knowledge that Cosimo intended to nominate his daughter, the Electress Anna Maria Ludovica, to succeed his second son if she outlived the latter; and the Emperor Charles VI. signified to her and to Cosimo that he would be ready to give his sanction to this arrangement.

In 1713, when Cosimo was seventy-one, his

[1] Napier.

eldest son, Prince Ferdinand, died, at the age of fifty.[1] He was greatly lamented in Tuscany, not only on account of his abilities, his agreeable disposition (which caused the excesses of his later years to be forgiven), and his constant opposition to the foolish methods of government by which the country was being brought to ruin, but also on account of the high hopes which had been entertained of the complete change which it was felt he would have introduced whenever he succeeded to the throne.

Upon the death of Cosimo's eldest son the Florentine Senate was convened, and passed a decree,[2] which was confirmed by the Grand Duke, that on the death of Prince Giovanni Gastone, his sister, the Electress Anna Maria Ludovica, should succeed to the throne. This decree was formally promulgated and communicated to the various courts of Europe, its promulgation in

[1] He is buried in the family mausoleum. When in 1857 his coffin was opened, the body was found "dressed in the costume of the time, wearing a breast-plate over a brocaded coat embroidered in silver. The breeches were fastened at the knee with buckles, each having five diamonds. The stockings were of silk, and the shoes ornamented with large roses of lace. The ruffles of the shirt sleeves were fastened with links made of two small gold buttons with his own initials on them. His sword, with the hilt entwined with a gold sword knot, lay by his side broken. Near his head was a gold medallion, and another similar to it on the breast, bearing on one side his likeness and name, and on the other a thunderbolt issuing from the clouds and the motto *Et lucet et terret.*" But the most remarkable thing about this coffin (showing also that it must have been opened again on a subsequent occasion) was that it contained the embalmed heart of Ferdinand's wife, the Princess Violante, who died many years after him. For the same report says:—"In this coffin was also found, enclosed in a vase of majolica, the heart of the Princess Violante Beatrice of Bavaria, his wife." The vase had an inscription giving her name, titles, and amiable qualities, and stating that "this truly royal heart, which in life was full of all virtues, has in accordance with her dying will and testament been placed in this coffin of her husband." (*Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum.* 1857.)

[2] Dated November 1713.

Florence being accompanied by public festivities. Austria declined to agree, declaring that the decree showed that Cosimo's ultimate intention was to give Tuscany to a Bourbon; but Cosimo placed his chief reliance on England and Holland, who were both ready to withstand Austria in the matter, George I. being specially opposed to any foreign power obtaining a preponderating influence in Italy. France also did not object to the decree, Louis XIV. only taking exception to its incompleteness, and urging that prudence, policy, and national justice pointed to the ultimate successor being the Princess Elizabeth of Parma, through Margherita de' Medici, daughter of Cosimo II.[1] Lastly, Philip V. of Spain took a still more definite course by promptly marrying the Princess Elizabeth, as a preliminary to claiming Tuscany for Spain when the time came. Meanwhile the Peace of Utrecht (1714) took place without any opposition being made by any of the powers to the Electress Anna Maria Ludovica being considered the rightful successor to the throne of Tuscany after her brother, Giovanni Gastone.

In 1715 Louis XIV. died, his death causing important changes in European politics; and in 1716 the Electress Anna Maria Ludovica, now fifty years of age, became a widow, and returned from Dusseldorf to Florence, where she immediately became the principal personage at the court. On her arrival Ferdinand's widow, the Princess Violante, retired to Siena, of which she was made Governor. The altered state of European affairs

[1] Chap. xxviii. p. 398.

caused by the death of Louis XIV. led in 1718 to a quadruple alliance between England, Holland, France, and Austria. And these powers in a treaty concluded at London decided, without even consulting the Grand Duke of Tuscany, that on the death of Cosimo's son, Gian Gastone, Tuscany should go to Don Carlos of Spain, the eldest son of Elizabeth of Parma, Queen of Spain; this being done in order to pacify Austria as to the chance of a Bourbon being allowed to obtain Tuscany. The article of this treaty which thus sacrificed Tuscany, trampled on a formal national decree, and excluded Cosimo's favourite child from the succession, was kept secret, but could not long be concealed; and when it became known it filled both the Florentines and the Grand Duke with unbounded indignation. The people hated Cosimo, but at the moment this feeling was swallowed up in their wrath against the four powers who had thus treated their country. Cosimo sent vehement protests to all the powers concerned; but each of them profited in various ways by other clauses in the treaty, and would do nothing to invalidate it; and Cosimo was informed that he must submit, and that if he did not, foreign troops would be sent into Tuscany to hold it for disposal in accordance with the treaty of London. Thus did Cosimo see himself insulted, his country sold, and the independence of Tuscany annihilated.

But at this juncture Cosimo,[1] though he was now seventy-six years old, displayed an energy and vigour at variance with all his previous history. Troops were raised throughout Tuscany, the fortresses were repaired and their armaments

[1] Plate XCVI.

brought up to date, the harbour defences of Porto Ferrajo and Leghorn were strengthened, and every arrangement made to resist to the uttermost. Tuscany, if it was to perish as an independent state, should die fighting. At the same time Cosimo drew up a formal declaration to the powers which stated that "no successor to the Medici could be recognised in the free and independent State of Tuscany unless approved by the people through their representative the Florentine Senate; therefore no power had a right to exclude the Electress Anna as chosen by that body and hailed with public acclamation; and that except by violence there was no way of making a free nation submit to feudal supremacy, a thing utterly at variance with its nature and institutions; or of introducing garrisons into a neutral and unoffending country which had only been striving to preserve its own peace without molesting any one."[1] By this time England and Holland were at war; it was believed that Cosimo's determined attitude must be supported secretly by some other power; while it seemed probable that some new turn in international politics might throw the whole question again into discussion. Cosimo's protest was consequently received with respect.

In 1720 peace was again restored, and a fresh congress was assembled at Cambrai. At this congress the whole question of the Tuscan succession was argued out afresh, Cosimo's ambassador being Corsini, who displayed much ability in demonstrating the injustice to Tuscany of the proposed course, and more particularly the certainty that

[1] Napier's *Florentine History*, vol. v. p. 550.

COSIMO III., AT THE AGE OF SEVENTY.
*From an old Engraving.*

any rule of that country in Austrian hands (which the Florentines feared was now contemplated) would be of a most tyrannical character; while in any case it was, he argued, most unfair not to allow the rule of Tuscany to pass, after Prince Giovanni Gastone's death, to his sister, the Electress Anna Maria Ludovica, she being eminently qualified, both in character and ability, to govern the country well. These discussions at Cambrai continued all through the years 1721 and 1722, while the negotiations, intrigues, and secret agreements between the various powers over the bone of contention, Tuscany, were interminable.

Meanwhile age began to tell upon Cosimo. Worn out by these long contests over the independence of his country, and with his strength failing now that he was approaching eighty years of age, he abandoned the rule of the state entirely to his capable daughter, with whose control of affairs her brother, Gian Gastone (only anxious to be left in his beloved seclusion), had no desire to interfere. She conducted all negotiations with foreign powers, showed a capable management of home affairs, mitigated the harsher aspects of Cosimo's laws, and spent much in works of public benefit. Her conduct was widely praised, and it became a general wish that she might survive her brother and succeed to the throne. So that her efforts to make other powers accept the decree of the Florentine Senate were vigorously supported by the people of Tuscany. The memory of her mother's youthful sorrows was revived in September 1721 by the death of the Grand Duchess Marguerite Louise at Paris at the age of seventy-six; and this

increased the regard entertained for the daughter of a princess for whom the Florentines had always felt much sympathy.

In 1723, the discussions at Cambrai showing that whatever other arrangements were made between the leading powers of Europe they were determined to adhere to their unjust treatment of Tuscany, Corsini was instructed to lodge a final solemn protest, with the object of asserting the rights of Cosimo's successor and of making the act of violence on which the powers were bent more marked. This was the last public act of Cosimo's life; and on the 31st October 1723, after handing over the government to his son Gian Gastone, Cosimo III. passed away,[1] after a reign of fifty-three years in which (with the best intentions) he had produced nothing but evil and the utmost national misery.

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Cosimo III. is an example of how a character which in a private capacity would be unobjectionable may in the position of a ruler become a pattern of everything most baneful. In a private sphere he

[1] Owing to the darkness and general confusion in the lower crypt, and to his coffin having no distinguishing marks on the outside, the thieves failed to discover it, and when opened in 1857 it still contained the jewelled crown and sceptre buried with him. "The body was clothed in the great cloak of Grand Master of the order of Santo Stefano, and by his side the sceptre. On the head was the royal crown, worn over a velvet cap. Under the cloak the body was wrapped in a black silk sheet, and had near the head a large gold medallion, and another similar to it on the breast. These medallions had on one side his likeness and name, and on the reverse a female figure representing Tuscany seated in front of a temple inscribed 'Paci', with the Grand Duke clad in armour standing before her and making a sign that it should remain closed, with the motto 'Sic stabis.'" (*Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum.* 1857.)

would have been a very ordinary person, and probably much respected, since the chief defects of his character would never in that case have had any opportunity of developing. Placed, however, on a throne, the combined effects of his want of wisdom, vanity, weakness, bigotry, and tyranny caused him to present an example of everything that is worst in a ruler. Under him joyous and light-hearted Tuscany became a vale of tears. Hating his sons, apparently for no other reason than that they were each in their different ways more capable than himself, he ruined both their lives by the most narrow-minded domestic tyranny. Lastly, Cosimo III. was the first of his house who by his conduct as a ruler turned the poorer classes of the people against him, and thereby overthrew that which had always been the strongest bulwark of his family. Such was the result which had been produced by Ferdinand II.'s weakness in allowing his eldest son to be brought up by a foolish and incapable mother in the manner that he did, whereby evils were entailed for half a century, upon both the country and the family, which were appalling in their magnitude and deplorable in their consequences.

# CHAPTER XXX

## GIOVANNI GASTONE

*Born* 1671. (*Reigned* 1723-1737.) *Died* 1737.

We must not linger over the remaining years of the Medici, for their sun is setting fast, and setting in deepest gloom. From the effects of such a reign as that of Cosimo III. they were not able to recover, and the fourteen years' reign of the last Medici Grand Duke has little to show us upon which it is pleasant to dwell.

Gian Gastone[1] was fifty-two when in 1723 he succeeded to a throne which he looked upon by no means as an object of desire, but rather as a distasteful burden which he would have escaped from if he could, grievously interfering as it did with the seclusion to which, by being uniformly excluded by his father from all public affairs, he had grown accustomed.

Nevertheless Gian Gastone set himself with commendable perseverance to reform the many abuses which weighed upon the country. He dismissed at once all the spies, hypocrites, and sycophants who had surrounded his father; he annulled at a stroke the long list of pensions (called "Pensions on the Creed") paid to Jews, Turks, heterodox Catholics, heretical Protestants, and other so-called "converts," which had formed

[1] Plate XCVII. This portrait, which is in a very ruined state, is the only one which exists of Gian Gastone as Grand Duke. He wears on the front of his dress the cross of the order of San Stefano. The crown by his side is the "Royal" crown granted to the Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1691.

GIOVANNI GASTONE, SECOND SON OF COSIMO III.
(LAST MEDICI GRAND DUKE).

*Barton.* *Pitti Gallery.*

PRINCESS VIOLANTE BEATRICE OF BAVARIA.

Wife of Prince Ferdinand, and sister-in-law of Giovanni Gastone, at the age of thirty.

*Burton*] [*Uffizi Gallery.*

a heavy item in the national expenditure; and by other similar measures set himself resolutely to relieve taxation. He abolished the organised system of *espionage* which had so long been established over the domestic life of the citizens; the prison doors were opened, and prisoners (most of them under punishment for ecclesiastical offences) set at liberty; penalties were remitted, and exiles allowed to return. Imitating the example of his grandfather, Ferdinand II., Gian Gastone mixed freely with his subjects; and to assist him in social matters — since his wife, Anne of Saxe-Lauenburg, refused to live in Tuscany, and he disliked his arbitrary sister, the Electress — he installed his widowed sister-in-law, the Princess Violante Beatrice, as dispenser of the hospitalities of the court. The Royal Palace reawoke to life; the religious gloom which had long hung round it was swept away; and instead of the dark-robed monks who had pervaded its corridors and precincts, the youth and beauty of Florence were once more gathered within its walls.

Violante Beatrice of Bavaria.

The Princess Violante[1] was the bright spot in Gian Gastone's reign. Her virtues, amiability, and good sense were invaluable to him. In a short time she became the chief influence, not only in social matters, but also in public affairs; an influence justly deserved, and followed by the best results. She was universally beloved; possessing considerable

[1] Plate XCVIII. This portrait is specially interesting, it having been supposed that no portrait of Violante Beatrice existed. It was found in the cellars of the Uffizi, and has now been placed in that gallery.

talents she was a zealous patroness of literature and of genius in every form, her sympathy for the poor and oppressed was continually manifested, cheerfulness followed wherever she appeared, and we are told, "she was equally liked by the learned, the friendless, and the gay."[1] Her many virtues were so generally acknowledged that Pope Benedict XIII. (1724-1730) bestowed on her the Golden Rose. Nor were any found who did not consider this unusual honour deserved.

The intrigues of the chief powers of Europe, as to which of them should become the possessor of Tuscany on Gian Gastone's death, still continued; and, feeling himself powerless to oppose them, the latter turned his chief attention to securing that whenever the throne passed into other hands his sister's inheritance of the vast private property belonging to the family should be assured to her, and to obtaining compensation to her for territorial or other possessions of the State which had been purchased out of the family's private fortune. The former category included their various palaces and villas crowded with precious furniture and countless objects of art, which were all indisputably the private property of the family; while in the latter category were included the whole of the artillery, certain ports and fortresses, and the town and district of Pontremoli. In this endeavour Gian Gastone was to a large extent successful, it being conceded that the private property of the family would, of course, be inherited by his sister; while the question of compensation for possessions of the State which had

[1] Napier.

been purchased out of their private fortune was left for future settlement; though in the end the Medici received no compensation on this account.

During the years 1724-1731 the discussions and negotiations between the leading powers of Europe over the Tuscan succession were endless, Austria refusing to consider any other question until this was settled, while Spain endeavoured in every way to compel Gian Gastone to accept Don Carlos as his successor, fear of Austria alone preventing her from sending troops into the country to enforce this. Meanwhile the condition of the people of Tuscany steadily improved; Gian Gastone's reduction of taxation, his abolition of the punishment of death, his destruction of the hated system of domestic *espionage*, and his efforts for the amusement of the people had brought about gaiety and light-heartedness in place of gloom and misery; commerce and agriculture began to revive; while the Princess Violante's cheerfulness spread itself everywhere, everything which could create happiness among the people being encouraged by her.

Nor did the gloomy prospects of Tuscany in the political sphere blacken the people's whole horizon. In those days Florence was accustomed from time to time to give itself up to a simple light-hearted enjoyment which helped not a little to ameliorate adverse political conditions. Thus at the time of the annual Carnival in particular there were not only processions of carriages (*corsi*) with battles of flowers and *confetti*, but also numerous masked balls, masquerades, and other diversions of the kind in which all classes joined. During Carnival time

masks were permitted to be worn both at the theatres and in the streets, any attempt to restrict this being much resented by the people. The Uffizi colonnade, known to us under such a different aspect, must have presented a singularly animated and picturesque appearance on an afternoon preceding one of these masked balls. For whenever a masked ball was to take place in the evening it was customary for this to be preceded in the afternoon by a promenade in masks and dominoes under this colonnade, such promenades being attended by all classes, and even the Grand Duke himself sometimes taking part in them.

But a shadow was cast over everything by the proceedings of the various powers who were anxious for Gian Gastone's death, each bent upon being the first in the field when that event occurred. A slight illness of his in 1728 was at once represented by Spain and Austria as a mortal sickness; whereupon an Imperial edict was issued calling on the Tuscans when Gian Gastone expired to acknowledge the successor appointed by Austria. The Grand Duke remonstrated against such a disturbance of his government, but his protests were ignored. In the following year, upon his dislocating his ankle by a fall, reports of his death were again spread. Spain assembled a fleet and army to take possession of Tuscany, while Austria sent thirty thousand men into Lombardy, commanded by Marshal Daun, who offered their services to the Grand Duke. But Gian Gastone was determined, if possible, to prevent Tuscany from being desolated by war; he declined the

offer, and temporised with Spain, and the danger for the moment passed off, Gian Gastone agreeing to acknowledge Don Carlos as his successor, and Spain offering in return to consent to the Electress Anna Maria Ludovica being a member of the Cabinet with the title of Grand Duchess.

While all Europe resounded with preparations for war, the death of Pope Benedict XIII. started a fresh series of negotiations. Austria demanded to be allowed to occupy Milan, while the Spanish fleet threatened to seize Leghorn. Gian Gastone still refused to agree to the occupation of any part of Tuscany by either of the rival powers, but began to be weary of this struggle against contending forces whom he was powerless to resist. And the death of Princess Violante[1] in 1731, amidst the tears of a whole nation, completed his despair. He had never wholly relinquished the vices to which he had taken during his father's lifetime, and these now established a complete hold over him. He abandoned public affairs almost entirely to his ministers; an infamous favourite, Giuliano Dami, became the head of his household, the dispenser of honours, and the sole channel of access to him; and retiring from public view Gian

[1] She was buried by her own desire in the convent of Sta. Teresa. But during the time of the French occupation of Florence at the beginning of the nineteenth century her remains were brought thence and interred in the Medici mausoleum. When in 1857 the Medici coffins were examined, hers "was found bound with a red cord and stamped with the seal of the French Emperor, but it contained only bones intermingled with fragments of lead. On the night of the 26th February 1858, her remains were again restored to the convent of Sta. Teresa, being borne thither in the royal hearse with all honour, and laid at rest in the nuns' cemetery." (*Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum.*) It has already been noted how her embalmed heart was found in another coffin, being placed by her desire in that of her husband (chap. xxix. p. 479, footnote).

Gastone sank into absolute degradation, becoming a drunken sensualist seen only by a group of the vilest companions, "spending half his time in bed to recover from the effects of the half ill-spent out of it," and seeking diversion in the company of buffoons.

Meanwhile Spain and Austria each took steps to obtain a military hold of the country. A combined Spanish and British fleet seized Leghorn, and landed an army of thirty thousand Spaniards who were quartered in different parts of Tuscany. Thereupon the Emperor Charles VI. despatched an Austrian army of fifty thousand men to enter Tuscany by Pontremoli; and a struggle in Tuscany between the two powers was only averted by Don Carlos being called away to lead a Spanish army against Naples, Austria at the same time suffering a defeat at the passage of the Po. The Emperor's intention was to give Tuscany, if he obtained it, to his daughter, the celebrated Maria Theresa. The Florentines, on the other hand, hated the idea of an Austrian ruler, and if they were not to have one of their own race, infinitely preferred a Spanish to an Austrian one. France looked only at what might best assist her views in regard to Milan and Savoy; while England and Holland desired peace in any way that it could be attained, regardless of what consequences might result to Tuscany.

At length, in October 1735, an agreement was made between Austria, France, England, and Holland, as the basis of a general peace, that the Grand Duchy of Tuscany should be given to

the Emperor's daughter, Maria Theresa; that she should be married to Francis, Duke of Lorraine; and that the latter, in exchange for Tuscany, should resign Lorraine to France; Tuscany thus becoming, instead of Lorraine, an appanage of the house of Austria. Spain at first refused to agree, but having suffered reverses both in Lombardy and Naples, eventually did so on being given a *quid pro quo* elsewhere. And in January 1736 this agreement between the five powers was ratified at the Peace of Vienna.

The Florentines were furious at their country being thus deliberately sold by the powers of Europe, and the more so at being after all handed over to an Austrian ruler, predicting that they would be subjected to a grinding tyranny.[1] Gian Gastone sent urgent protests to London, Paris, and Vienna, but without any avail; he was looked on by the powers as "a mere object of sale." Weakened in mind and body by his excesses, plunged into deepest melancholy at the fate of his country and family, and sinking under an accumulation of miseries, he left his ministers to govern the country as they chose. On the 12th February 1736 Francis, Duke of Lorraine, was married to Maria Theresa,[2] and formally renounced the Duchy of Lorraine in exchange for the territories of the Medici whenever they should become vacant by Gian Gastone's death, the arrangement being guaranteed by France and Austria.

[1] This expectation was falsified by subsequent events, the Austrian rule over Tuscany proving a lenient and beneficent one.

[2] By this marriage Francis nine years later became Emperor.

In January 1737, in accordance with the above convention, the Spanish garrisons throughout Tuscany were withdrawn and Austrian troops took their place, General Braitwitz at Florence and General Wachtendonk at Leghorn swearing allegiance to the Grand Duke on the 5th February 1737. But Gian Gastone was already dying of an accumulation of diseases, and past caring who had Tuscany. One last act his love of science prompted—the erection in Sta. Croce of the monument to Galileo and removal to it of the latter's remains from the Medici chapel attached to that church. The first public act of the first Medici had been that of taking a prominent part in the birthday of Art; the last public act of the last Medici Grand Duke was the erection of a due memorial to Science. On the 9th July 1737 Gian Gastone breathed his last at the age of sixty-six,[1] sincerely regretted by the people, who had greatly benefited by his principles of government, and only saw his vices dimly at a distance, while they mourned at the passing away of the last ruler over Tuscany belonging to their own race.

[1] He is buried in the family mausoleum. As in the case of that of his father, his coffin escaped discovery by the thieves who subsequently plundered the Medici coffins (chap. xxxii. p. 515), and when opened in 1857 was found unrifled. "The body was dressed in black velvet, with, over this, the great cloak of Grand Master of the order of Santo Stefano. On the head was the Grand Ducal crown, worn over a cap; and by his side the sceptre. But the crown and sceptre were corroded by the acids which had been used in embalming the body. Round the neck was a rosary with a gold filigree medal. On the breast and near the head were two great gold medallions, each weighing twelve ounces. These had on one side a symbolical temple in ruins, with female figures, representing Art and Science, weeping; and on the reverse a funeral urn with, resting upon it, his bust, and a figure representing Hope letting another similar bust fall. Round the border was his name." (*Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum.* 1857.)

# CHAPTER XXXI

## ANNA MARIA LUDOVICA

("THE LAST OF THE MEDICI")

*Born* 1667. *Died* 1743.

THE Electress Anna Maria Ludovica[1] was seventy years old when her brother Gian Gastone died. Married at twenty-four to the Elector Palatine of the Rhine, she had filled an important position for twenty-six years up to the time of his death and her return as a widow to live with her father Cosimo. And during those years she had shown herself to be a woman of unusual ability. After her father's death she had, during the fourteen years of her brother's reign, lived more or less in retirement, not being on good terms with him, and feeling shame at the degradation into which he sank during the latter part of his reign. Endowed with more energy and force of character than either of her brothers, she had ruled well during the few years that her father had left the government in her hands, notwithstanding that she was considerably handicapped by the style of administration which he had established. As the result

[1] Plate XCIX. This portrait of the Electress Anna Maria Ludovica, standing with the electoral crown by her side, shows her as she was at the age of sixty. The manner in which she contrives to wear the widow's veil required by the custom of the time, and yet not to let it interfere with her wearing a jewelled ornament in her hair, is ingenious. The crown was buried with her (p. 507, footnote).

of her satisfactory control of affairs she had seen herself earnestly desired by the people of Tuscany as their future ruler, and had seen a decree passed by the Florentine Senate assuring the throne to her on her brother's death; and she had also seen that decree spurned and over-ridden by the chief powers of Europe, herself and her ancient family insulted, and the independence of her country trampled upon. She was now to see the final stage in that process, and the inauguration of a foreign rule over Tuscany; even the promise that in any new government established she should be a member of the Council and have the rank and title of Grand Duchess being set aside.

It would all have been hard enough for an exceptionally proud woman like the Electress Anna to endure if the Austrian Grand Duke had proceeded to occupy in person the throne which her grandfather's great-grandfather had created. It was made many times worse by the kind of rule which was set up.

Upon Gian Gastone's death the new Grand Duke, Francis II., came to Florence and formally took possession of the state, but after a month or two departed to Vienna, and thenceforth left the government of Tuscany to be permanently[1] administered (or mal-administered) by an agent, a certain M. de Beauveu, who was given the title of Prince de Craon. Both he and his wife were

[1] Tuscany continued to be ruled in this way, as a mere province of Austria, for the whole of the next twenty-eight years; until in 1765 the Empress Maria Theresa's third son, Pietro Leopoldo, was at the age of eighteen made Grand Duke of Tuscany, and came to conduct the government in person.

ANNAE MARIAE LVDOVICAE
COSMI III MAG. ETR. DVCIS FILIAE
PALATIN. AD RHENVM. ELECTRICI
MEDICEORVM PRINCIPVM VLTIMAE
QVOD HANC DOMVM AGNATIONE
HOMINVM SIBI PROXIMAM
INSTITVTA IN EA, IN PERPETVVM, PRIMO GENITVRA
HEREDEM RELICTO LOCVPLETI LEGATO
TESTAMENTO SVO INSTITVERIT
TANTI HONORIS ET BENEFICII MEMOR
NICOLAVS MEDICES POSTERIS EXEMPLOM EXHIBET
A. D. MDCCV L.

THE ELECTRESS ANNA MARIA LUDOVICA, AT THE AGE OF SIXTY, AS A WIDOW.
*Reproduced by permission of the Marchese Peruzzi de' Medici.*

*Burton*

persons of exceedingly low birth and manners; yet they assumed vice-regal airs, lived in the Royal Palace, and maintained a third-rate kind of court, the chief feature of which was its vulgarity. All posts in the new administration were speedily filled with Lorrainers, and the Tuscans had occular demonstration at every turn that they were now under a foreign rule. The meanness, the corruption, and the degraded character of this collection of needy place-hunters are graphically described in the letters of the first English ambassador ever sent to the court of Tuscany,[1] which show that as far as corruption in the administration was concerned, the country had gained nothing by the change.

With a court of this description established in the Palace, there ensued a total decline in the dignity which even in the worst days of Cosimo III. and Gian Gastone had ever been accustomed to reign there. Horace Mann remarks on the entire inability of the new *régime* to maintain a due ceremony even on grand occasions, and says:—"They seem to forget the example of the Medici, the ceremony of whose court put it in their power to make a figure in things of more importance." Added to this the ignorance and want of taste of the newcomers in all matters relating to Art was colossal; and this, while specially irritating to the Florentines, often had the most ridiculous results. Among other demonstrations

[1] Horace Mann was sent as the first English ambassador to the court of Tuscany in 1741, four years after Gian Gastone's death. His copious letters to Horace Walpole (which begin at once on his arrival at Florence) are therefore the best available evidence as to the social and political conditions which succeeded those which had existed under the Medici Grand Dukes.

of this want of a quality which every Medici had possessed, the arrangement of the pictures in the Palace offered a conspicuous example. These were rearranged on a new principle, the two guiding rules of which were, first, the degree of freshness of the gilding on the frames, and, second, the position of the figures in the picture, *which figures must not turn their backs towards the throne.*

It was no wonder, the new Government being of this description, that the Electress Anna (the descendant of a race which even in their decay had still been distinguished) kept herself aloof from such a company. She occupied her own separate portion of the Palace, and had no relations with the new Grand Duke's agent and his wife.

"She lived retired; but it was a retirement of the utmost splendour. All that art and ingenuity could supply and money purchase the aged daughter of Cosimo gathered round her—jewels, precious metals, costly attire—the mass of these was immense."[1]

Moreover, she still continued to add pictures to the Uffizi Gallery. As a child she had known her great-uncle, Cardinal Leopold, and had imbibed some of the ideals which animated him, and nearly all the pictures of the Flemish and German schools which the Uffizi Gallery possesses were added to it by her.[2]

[1] Horace Mann's letters to Horace Walpole.

[2] "She was herself an artist, something more than an amateur, and had added a picture by herself to the masterpieces in the great gallery." —(Mann).

The amount that this daughter of the Medici spent in charity astounded the English ambassador; "1,000 zechins a month, often more."[1] As three zechins made £1 sterling, this represented £4,000 a year, equal at the present value of money to considerably more; and even this, he says, she often exceeded. No wonder the poor wept inconsolably when she died. She continued to maintain to some extent the state to which she had been accustomed in former days. The poet Gray, who was presented to her in 1740, describes her as receiving him "with much ceremony, standing under a huge black canopy," and as "never going out but to church, and then with guards and eight horses to her coach."

Thus did Anna Maria Ludovica de' Medici maintain in all ways the name of her family. However much that name had suffered discredit through others, it suffered none through her. And whether in regard to ruling with ability, the encouragement of all forms of art, a generous liberality to the poor, or the maintenance of a proper dignity, she showed herself a worthy descendant of the best of those who had gone before.

The object, however, which chiefly engaged both her time and her money was the completion of the family mausoleum. The work had somewhat languished during the reigns of Cosimo III. and Gian Gastone, but Anna Maria Ludovica applied all her energies and the greater part of her large income to completing it as far as possible during the few years of life that remained to her. Her

[1] Horace Mann's letters to Horace Walpole.

health was failing; she knew she had but a short time; and she pressed on this work vigorously, giving to it as much as "1,000 crowns a week,"[1] and in her will leaving a large sum to be invested in order to provide a regular income for the completion of the building according to the original design.[2] There is something both pathetic and fine in the sight of this lonely and childless woman, the last of her race, steadily labouring in the midst of disappointment, sorrow, and ill-health, to complete the mausoleum of her ancestors before death should call her away to follow them.

The parting gift.

But Anna Maria Ludovica did something more noteworthy than this. Her chief act was one as fine under the circumstances as anything the Medici did throughout their history. And by it she caused their sun, so long enveloped in dark clouds and impenetrable gloom, to shine out, as it sank, in one departing ray of most resplendent glory. She hated the new dynasty; she felt that her family had been grievously treated by not being allowed to leave the throne of Tuscany to whomsoever they considered had the best right to it; she felt herself still more grievously ill used in not being allowed to succeed her brother as Grand Duchess in her own right; while the sore feelings thus created were daily kept alive by the conduct of the ignoble court occupying the palace which had been built by her family and been their home for two

[1] Mann.

[2] *See* the codicil added for this purpose to her will (p. 509).

hundred years. But at the same time she loved Tuscany; she was keenly mindful of her family's long and honourable connection with that country; and she was determined that, whatever her father and brother had been, she at least would support that connection with honour to the very end. And so she made that splendid gift which should make her name ever honoured in Florence.

Far-reaching memories and mingled feelings must have filled the mind of Anna Maria Ludovica as, last solitary owner of the greatest collection of art treasures in the world, she wandered through the long galleries of the Uffizi and the Pitti surrounded by this mass of pictures, statues, bronzes, rare gems, and other works of art, the earliest of them executed for Cosimo, Piero, and Lorenzo, the latest added to the collection by herself, and thought over what she had determined on doing with this great inheritance.

The convention between the powers which had assigned the throne to a foreign prince had not touched the vast private property of the family, including the countless objects of art and other valuable things with which their palaces, villas, and picture-galleries were crowded; and to all these she had succeeded on her brother's death. The whole of this invaluable collection of treasures Anna Maria Ludovica now gave to the state of Tuscany for ever, in the person of the new Grand Duke and his successors, *on condition that none of it should ever be removed from Florence, and that it should be for the benefit of the public of all nations.*[1]

[1] Article III. of the document in which Her Serene Highness the Electress Anna Maria Ludovica makes this gift to Tuscany.

What the value in money of this truly royal gift may be is probably beyond computation. It included, with much besides:[1]—

(*a*) The whole of the pictures and statues which were in the Uffizi Gallery, the Royal Palace, the Villa Medici at Rome, and the other villas of the family, and now forming the Uffizi and Pitti Galleries.

(*b*) The rare collection of gems and other objects of art, now in the Gem Room of the Uffizi Gallery.

(*c*) A great collection of cameos, engraved gems, and similar articles, now in the museum of the Bargello, and including the celebrated collection of coins and medallions of Lorenzo the Magnificent, the oldest in Europe.

(*d*) Statues and busts by Donatello, Verrocchio, Mino da Fiesole, and other notable sculptors, now in the museum of the Bargello.

(*e*) A great collection of bronzes, now in the museum of the Bargello.

(*f*) The New Sacristy, with the masterpieces of Michelangelo.

(*g*) The whole of the contents of the Library of the Palace, and the Medici Library in San Lorenzo.

(*h*) A large and important collection of Egyptian and Etruscan antiquities,

[1] It is not meant to imply that there have not been other works of art added to these galleries and museums since, but these additions are in proportion insignificant.

now forming the chief part of the Egyptian and Etruscan Museums, the Etruscan portion being specially valuable.

(*i*) A valuable collection of majolica, Urbino-ware, Faenza-ware, rare suits of armour, and curious and valuable arms, now in the museum of the Bargello.

(*j*) A large collection of valuable tapestries, now forming the Galleria degli Arazzi.

(*k*) The valuable tables of *pietra dura* work, cabinets, and other precious furniture, now in the Uffizi and Pitti Galleries.

(*l*) The inlaid tables, valuable cabinets, tapestry, and other similar articles now in the Royal apartments of the Pitti Palace.

(*m*) The gold dessert service, gold and silver ornaments, rare china, valuable plate, croziers and crucifixes in ivory and amber, the mitre with miniatures made of humming-birds' feathers which had belonged to Clement VII., priceless works in *niello*, handsome goblets and vases by Benvenuto Cellini, and many other heirlooms of the family, all now in the Treasure Room of the Pitti Palace.

(*n*) The reliquaries and other ornaments of the Grand Ducal chapel in the Pitti Palace.

(*o*) The immense Medicean wardrobe of costly robes and dresses for state occasions.[1]

[1] *See* p. 505.

From Poggio Imperiale, from Castello, from Petraia, from Cafaggiolo, from Poggio a Caiano, from the Villa Medici at Rome, from every habitation that the Medici had occupied, poured in for many years afterwards this great collection of objects of art to be gathered in the galleries and museums of Florence in accordance with the terms of this gift; terms to which Florence owes it that these treasures have not been long since either dispersed,[1] or removed to Vienna or Rome. The Medici themselves have passed away, but their works live on. And of all that they have left behind them as a record of the spirit which animated them, nothing can surpass that which a whole world enjoys through the gift which was their last act, and which the traditions of their house and the principles implanted long before by its founder caused them to present to their nation, even when smarting under a sense of injustice and disappointment.

Speaking of this action, an Italian writer of the present day has said:—

"By this act the Princess Anna Maria, in securing to the country so much that was most notable of its art, acquired a truly imperishable title to the gratitude of Italy, and one which deserved to outweigh and make forgiven many faults of her ancestors."[2]

It is when one looks at the Florence of to-day, without manufactures or the business of a seaport and yet so prosperous a city, that one realises what this gift (with all the others previously given by

[1] In the same manner as the valuable collections once possessed by Modena, Mantua, and Ferrara have been.

[2] *Gli ultimi dei Medici*, by Emilio Robiony (1905).

the Medici) has meant to her. That prosperity entirely depends on Florence's power to attract visitors from other countries; without that power she, the second city of Italy, would sink back at once to the level of her ancient rival Lucca. And were all that the Medici gave to Florence taken away[1] the whole of that influx of visitors from other countries would cease. For her three great churches would not by themselves attract it; and even San Marco would be gone.[2] So that Anna Maria Ludovica, little as she could have realised all that its consequences would be, by this parting gift in the name of her family did the very best thing she could have done to ensure the future prosperity of Florence. Yet in the city which her action has thus enriched her very name is almost unknown. No statue of her adorns any of its open spaces; no gallery or museum of all those which she has to a great extent filled, and protected from having their contents removed to other cities, has her name written over its doors or any bust or picture of her placed in honour on its walls. And thousands interested in art pass through Florence every season, or even leave that city after long residence there, without ever having heard her name.

Of the items included in this gift the last, the Medicean wardrobe, was not permanently retained.[3] Some thirty years afterwards, in the time of the Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo (the first of the Austrian Grand Dukes who was a resident ruler of

[1] Libraries, museums, and galleries of art, with much more besides.
[2] Vol. i. pp. 80-81.
[3] The terms of the gift had specially allowed this item to be at the free disposal of the Austrian Grand Duke.

Tuscany) it was broken up and sold. And some idea of the magnificence customary in what we now know as the Pitti Palace in the time of the Medici Grand Dukes is given us by the details of this sale, which on account of the mass of valuable things to be disposed of continued monthly for ten years. Napier says:—

"Nor was the ancient Medicean wardrobe, which had long reposed in idle splendour, more spared by the stern frugality of Leopold. . . . Almost every residence of the Medici throughout Tuscany had its peculiar wardrobe, independent of the great magazine of Medicean splendour in Florence, and all were now exposed to public sale. Velvets, damasks, gold embroideries, chairs and mirror frames of massive silver, gold brocades, rich lace, fringes, and costly silken fabrics, were either sold to the public or condemned to the crucible. Gian Gastone's state bed, embroidered throughout with a profusion of beautiful pearls and other gems, was picked to pieces, and many exquisite works in jewellery and precious metals, the symbols of Medicean taste and magnificence, were all broken up or otherwise disposed of to the amount of half a million of crowns." [1]

Anna Maria Ludovica had not to endure for many years the daily mortifications resulting from the establishment of a foreign rule over her country. In 1742, five years after that rule had been set up, her health began to give way. She suffered much from dropsy, and felt that she had not much longer to live. Having still a large amount of personal property to dispose of, including her own wearing jewels, the contents of her ward-

[1] Napier's *Florentine History*, vol. vi. p. 197.

robes, the furniture of her rooms, china, plate, and nearly £2,000,000 sterling in money, she set about adding various codicils to the will which she had made some three years before. And desiring to leave some portion of her property to her next-of-kin, whoever he might be, she had drawn up for her a genealogical tree showing, not only the historic Medici, the descendants of Giovanni di Bicci, of whom she was the last, but also the collateral branches of the family.[1] By its means, retracing her family for some four hundred and fifty years, back to Salvestro, the grandfather of Giovanni di Bicci,[2] she discovered that a descendant of Salvestro's brother Giovenco, a certain Pietro Paolo de' Medici, was her nearest of kin, though not, of course, a descendant of the historic Medici; whereupon she added a clause to her will declaring him her heir and leaving him a portion of her property. She only lived a few months after completing these final testamentary dispositions; and on the 18th February 1743, at the age of seventy-six, Anna Maria Ludovica, the last remaining descendant of Giovanni di Bicci, passed away,[3] and the family which he had founded,

[1] This very interesting old document, reproduced here for the first time by the kind permission of the Marchesa Peruzzi de' Medici, is shown in Appendix XV.

[2] *See* Appendix II.

[3] When in 1857 her coffin was opened, the body was found "wrapped in a silk sheet, under which was a handsome dress of violet-coloured velvet. On the head was the Electoral crown, which was fixed to the head with a long silver pin. On the breast was a large gold medallion, with on one side her likeness and name, and on the other the sun irradiating the world, with the motto *Diffuso lumine.*" Behind the head, engraved on a plate of copper, was a long Latin inscription of forty-four lines describing her good deeds and high character, the sorrow she had had to bear in seeing all of her family die before her and their line brought to an end, her splendid gift to Tuscany of all the art collections of the family, and the fortitude with which she had endured her disappointments and sorrows. (*Official Report on the examination of the Tombs in the Medici Mausoleum.* 1857.)

and which had had such a long and eventful history, was extinct.

The chief provisions of Anna Maria Ludovica's will and its codicils are briefly detailed by the English Ambassador, Horace Mann, as follows:—

(1) All her courtiers and servants to have their salaries for life.

(2) Pensions to her four executors.

(3) To pay the above pensions and salaries, a large sum of money deposited in the bank of Sta. Maria Nuova.

(4) To the Marquis Rinuncini (the principal executor) her lands in the State of Urbino, and a considerable legacy of much of the rich furniture in her Audience Room.

(5) Her china, half to young Rinuncini, and half to Coroni.

(6) To the Marquis Guadagni, to Siristori, and to Bardi (her other three executors) besides their pensions, very rich presents in silver.

(7) To Madame Uguccioni, her mistress of the robes, the whole of the contents of a room containing, besides many other things, velvet brocades, linen, etc., valued at 10,000 crowns, and a toilet service of gold.

(8) To all her maids-of-honour presents, and the usual fortunes in case of marriage.

(9) To the Austrian Grand Duke she left the whole of her own wearing jewels, "annexing them to those of the State

of Tuscany, with which they are to descend. Their value in present money is supposed about £500,000. Besides this the Grand Duke is left heir to a thousand other things."[1]

(10) To her "più prossimo agnato" (nearest of kin), Pietro Paolo de' Medici,[2] 30,000 crowns; and as other pensioners die off, their pensions to go to him and his heirs till the sum is made up to 100,000 crowns. Also jewels and plate valued at about 150,000 crowns.

(11) Presents in jewels to the Queen of Hungary (Maria Theresa), to Prince Charles, and to several princes of Germany.

(12) Also a very large legacy to the Prince of Salzbach (Elector Palatine).

A codicil, dated 7th October 1739, provided that on the death of legatees who were given pensions under the will, "the portions of the estate set free by their death are to be invested by the executors in sound securities, and the interest of such investments to be devoted to carrying on, finishing and perfecting the Royal Mausoleum situated behind the choir of the venerable

[1] One of these was the large and richly ornamented cabinet which was presented to Anna Maria Ludovica by the city of Paris, and is now to be seen in the hall in the Pitti Palace which was the Throne Room of the Medici Grand Dukes. It contains in the centre compartment a statuette of her husband, the Elector William, and the two side compartments when opened disclose two miniature ball-rooms, their walls lined with looking-glasses, and in the centre of each little ball-room a group of Cupids dancing, giving a very pretty effect.

[2] *See* Appendix XVI.

church of San Lorenzo with the same excellence and preciousness employed up to the present, and on the plan of the models and designs which have been made."[1]

On the night of the 22nd February a stately funeral, accompanied by every accessory which could heighten its melancholy grandeur, and surrounded by so great a mass of torches that they lighted up the entire street as the procession moved along,[2] left the Royal Palace, and passed slowly down the Via Maggio, over the Ponte Sta. Trinità, and along the Via Tornabuoni to the mausoleum behind San Lorenzo. "The body was conveyed in a sort of coach, quite open, and with a canopy over the head."[3] It was the funeral given by the orders of the Austrian Grand Duke to her who had hoped to die Grand Duchess of Tuscany in her own right. Thus with solemn pomp, and amidst the tears of the many poor whom she had assisted, was laid with her ancestors in that mausoleum where none any more were to be buried, one who had maintained not unworthily the honour of her family, and whose tomb bears the inscription, "The last of the royal race of the Medici."

[1] This, however, was not done so far as the interior decoration of the dome was concerned (*see* chap. xxvi. p. 357).

[2] Mann says that the number of torches was so great that their cost amounted to 12,000 crowns.

[3] Horace Mann's letters.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### SAN LORENZO AND THE TOMBS OF THE MEDICI

And so the long story of the Medici closes; and closes where it began, in that "venerable church of San Lorenzo,"[1] which they built and endowed, and which gathers in itself all the threads of their chequered history during the three hundred and forty-three years which lie between the tomb of Giovanni di Bicci in the Old Sacristy and that of Anna Maria Ludovica in the crypt of the mausoleum behind the choir. In this church they were baptized as children, married as young men and girls, and buried when their lives came to an end; for family tradition required that they should all be laid at last in San Lorenzo. And here the black threads of tragedy and sorrow, the blue ones of love and happiness, and the golden ones of gratified ambition mingle and cross each other in the great tapestry of this family's long romance.

Here in this church of San Lorenzo, soon after its rebuilding was finished, was seen the first great mourning of the family, when Cosimo's favourite son, Giovanni, died; soon followed by the funeral of Cosimo himself (1464). Here four years later took place the splendid marriage of the young

[1] Plate C.

Lorenzo to Clarice Orsini, when the whole city gave itself up to feasting and delight. A few years later we have a far different scene in San Lorenzo; it is after the murder at High Mass of the people's favourite, Giuliano, and the huge black catafalque surrounded with tall candles in the centre of the nave, the solemn music, and the weeping crowd, attest a whole city's grief (1478). Then come other scenes; the Medici are in exile, and every inch of standing space in the church is occupied by a deeply-moved crowd listening to the great preacher Savonarola, who delivered some of his most impressive sermons from the carved black marble pulpit which stands in the north aisle (1496). Four years after the return of the Medici comes the funeral of Giuliano (Duc de Nemours), the first of the family to be buried in the New Sacristy, then just added to the church (1516). And this is followed three years later by the pompous funeral of his nephew, Lorenzo (Duke of Urbino). Then after Florence's struggle for liberty is over, and Alessandro has been installed as Duke, we have another imposing scene in San Lorenzo. It is the marriage of Alessandro to Margaret, daughter of Charles V., the last step in a scheme which had subjected the city to a tyrant's rule, and the crowd which looks on is a sullen and dispirited one (1536). Six months later we have again a burial in San Lorenzo; but it is a very different one from any which have preceded. In the dead of night, with as few lights as possible, in silence and secrecy, the murder being still unknown to the city, is hurriedly borne into San Lorenzo by a few hired servants the body of the detested

INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH OF SAN LORENZO.

*Brogi*]

Alessandro. The lid of the sarcophagus of Lorenzo (Duke of Urbino) in the New Sacristy is forced open, the body unceremoniously placed therein, the sarcophagus again closed, and the small band of servants depart as secretly as they have come (1537). This is followed two years afterwards by the marriage of Duke Cosimo to Eleonora di Toledo, in the presence of her father, the Viceroy of Naples, and a numerous retinue of Spanish nobles. Twenty-three years later San Lorenzo witnessed those two sad funerals when Cosimo buried within one month his wife Eleonora and his two sons, Giovanni and Garzia (1562). And then, after the Medici had become Grand Dukes, San Lorenzo saw a long succession of splendid marriages and pathetic funerals, beginning with the marriage of Cosimo's son Francis to the Archduchess Joanna, the sister of an Emperor, and ending with the funeral of Anna Maria Ludovica, when San Lorenzo witnessed for the last time the burial of one of the house of Medici.

The plain, severe style of the church, with its columns of grey *pietra serena* ("the quiet stone"), has an indescribably peaceful effect. In the Old Sacristy (at the end of the south transept) lie Giovanni di Bicci, his wife Piccarda, and his two grandsons, Piero il Gottoso and Giovanni. In front of the high altar of the church lies Cosimo Pater Patriae. At the end of the north transept we have the New Sacristy,

> ". . . That Chamber of the Dead,
> Where the gigantic shapes of Night and Day,
> Turned into stone, rest everlastingly!"[1]

[1] Rogers' *Italy*.

Here, where so many of the house of Medici have at different times been interred,[1] there still rest the remains of Lorenzo the Magnificent, his brother Giuliano, Lorenzo's son Giuliano (Duc de Nemours), Lorenzo's grandson Lorenzo (Duke of Urbino), and Alessandro. Then comes a gap, Pietro (buried at Monte Cassino), Leo X. and Clement VII. (buried in Rome) and Catherine (buried in France) being absent. Lastly, in the mausoleum behind the choir[2] lie Giovanni delle Bande Nere and his wife Maria, with the thirty-two remaining members of the family.

In the case of the Old and New Sacristies the sarcophagi contain the remains of those to whom they refer; but in the case of the mausoleum all the tombs are in the crypt,[3] the sarcophagi in the upper portion of the mausoleum being only intended as monuments. As the church of San Lorenzo stands on a height, and as the floor of the mausoleum is on a level with that of the church, it results that the crypt of the mausoleum is above ground, being on the ground level of the Piazza Madonna, from which there is now an entrance to the crypt. As originally built there was no entrance from the Piazza Madonna, and the crypt could only be reached by the staircase leading down into it from the floor of the mausoleum. It was therefore a place where it

[1] Chap. xxix. p. 469.

[2] Plate CI. By a new arrangement, which has greatly improved the approach to these buildings, the entrance to the mausoleum and to the New Sacristy is now through the cloisters of San Lorenzo, instead of from the Piazza Madonna into the crypt as formerly.

[3] On the arch of the crypt furthest from the altar are the Medici arms, with the name of Ferdinand I., and the date of the commencement of the mausoleum, 1604.

was easy to keep the coffins secure from all danger of depredation by thieves who might seek to plunder them of the jewels which they contained. And in this crypt[1] the coffins (standing in the places marked by the respective tombstones) remained for about one hundred years.

But in 1791 the Austrian Grand Duke Ferdinand III. decided to remove them from this situation. A mortuary chapel for the Austrian Grand Dukes had been constructed in part of the vault of the church of San Lorenzo; and to reach it more conveniently this Grand Duke made an entrance from the Piazza Madonna into the crypt of the Medici mausoleum, so as to reach, by passing through the latter, the mortuary chapel which lies beyond it.[2] This throwing open of the crypt of the mausoleum made it necessary to remove the Medici coffins elsewhere. Beneath this upper crypt there is a lower (subterranean) one, of exactly the same size and shape; and to this the Grand Duke Ferdinand III. removed the Medici coffins.

Either during this removal of the coffins to the lower crypt in 1791, or during the sixty years after it (owing to want of due guard over them after they were placed in the lower crypt), thieves obtained access to the coffins,[3] plundering a number of them of their jewels, and creating considerable disorder.

In 1856, to remedy this state of things, it was

[1] *See* Appendix XVII., showing plan of the crypt and position of the respective tombstones.

[2] A small door at the end of the crypt opens into a passage which leads into this mortuary chapel of the Austrian Grand Dukes.

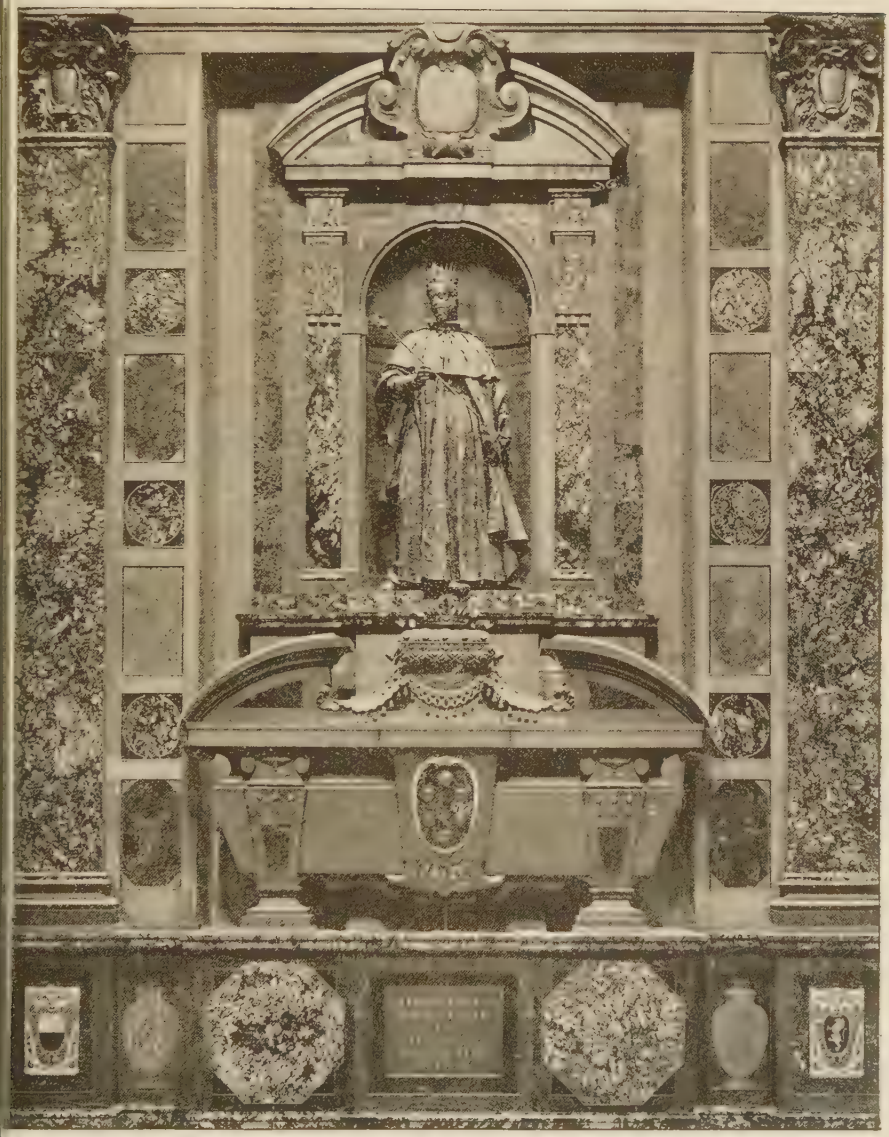
[3] It is asserted that this happened during the French occupation of Tuscany (1801-1814); and this is most probably the time when this plundering of the Medici coffins occurred.

decided to institute an official examination of the whole of the coffins, to open and examine each carefully, and to rearrange them in due order. Before this took place, the Pope, Pius IX., visited the mausoleum, and after holding a service in the crypt gave his authority for this examination of the bodies, ordering it to be conducted with due reverence for the dead. This was then carried out by a Commission appointed by the Government in 1857. The coffins, to the number of forty-nine, were in turn opened and examined, and the condition of the bodies, their dress, and ornaments were minutely detailed in an official report. The report showed (as will be seen by the details which have been given in the footnotes on the subject) that the bodies of all those who were cardinals had been left untouched by the thieves; but that all others[1] had been robbed of most of their jewels. The examination being concluded, the coffins were again closed, and were arranged in the lower crypt in the same situations as they had occupied in the upper crypt, each being placed immediately under the tombstone in the upper crypt having reference to it. And this done the entrance to the lower crypt (at the bottom of the flight of steps which leads down to it) was then walled up.[2]

Thus each tombstone in the upper crypt is over the coffin to which it refers. In the centre,

[1] Except those of Cosimo III. and Gian Gastone, which the thieves had not discovered.

[2] The whole work of this Commission was conducted with great care; each of the workmen employed to assist the Commission worked with two sentries over him to ensure that none of the jewels still left should be stolen; and the bodies remain with the dresses and ornaments which have been detailed in the various footnotes on the subject in chapters xxiii. to xxxi.



TOMB OF FERDINAND I.

[*Alinari*]

TOMB OF COSIMO II.

*Alinari*]

buried in his black armour, lies Giovanni delle Bande Nere (with on his tombstone the words *Cognomento Invictus*), and by his side his wife, Maria Salviati. Around them, in the various "bays" and other parts of the crypt, lie their descendants of six generations.[1] Anna Maria Ludovica, the last of them, rests near one of the centre pillars. Each of the first four Grand Dukes is interred in one of the "bays" with his wife and two of his children. Similarly in the upper part of the mausoleum each monument stands over the spot in the crypt which holds the tomb of that Grand Duke.

The three places of sepulture, the Old Sacristy at the end of the south transept,[2] the New Sacristy at the end of the north transept, and the mausoleum adjoining the choir, serve to mark the stages through which the Medici passed. We see them first as careful and assiduous men of business, prudent, generous of their wealth, and unflinching defenders of the poorer classes against tyranny; then as far-sighted and capable statesmen, heavily burdened with public affairs, and steadily raising the power and prosperity of their country above all her former rivals, and at the same time spending both efforts and wealth on the advancement of learning and the encouragement of all forms of art; lastly, we see them as crowned heads, ruling over a state which had been made by them the most important in Italy. And in each of these

[1] In several cases the few words on the tombstone, when studied in connection with the history, are very pathetic.

[2] The church of San Lorenzo is not orientated; the choir and high altar are at the western end.

stages we see them (until their decay) incontestably superior to all their contemporaries similarly situated.

Nor should the evils of one reign be allowed to occupy all the foreground of the picture to the exclusion of everything else. Many other Medici had governed Tuscany before Cosimo III.; and a single bad reign should not be suffered to do more than balance a single good one. The evil effects of Cosimo III.'s reign have long since passed away; the lasting benefits to Tuscany brought about by Cosimo I., Ferdinand I., Cosimo II., and Ferdinand II. (not to mention Cosimo Pater Patriae and Lorenzo the Magnificent) remain for all time.

Lastly, they were as a family justly to be called great. Great in their extraordinary ability; great in their large-mindedness; great in their generosity of character; great in their unparalleled love for Learning and Art; great in their abounding energy, vitality, and many-sidedness; great, above all, in their peculiar gift for pouring oil on troubled waters and allaying fierce political passions which no others could pacify. Speaking of their attainments and the causes to which their success was due, Yriarte says:—

"The grasp, the varied capacity, and the enterprising spirit of the Medici may be gathered from the specimens of their correspondence preserved in the archives of Florence. They are equally at home in the most contrasted topics; in war, in diplomacy, in domestic administration, in foreign policy, in literature, and in the fine arts. . . . Their success was due in no small degree to the grandeur

of conception, liberality, and nobility of mind that seemed natural to this family."

Looked at as a whole, they stand out as worthy reflectors of the glory of Tuscany.

The Medici, whatever else they may have been, were at all events thorough Florentines, and loved Florence with an ardour which none can surpass. When they became Grand Dukes they did not (as might have been the case) rule from a distance, receiving the surplus revenue of the State, spending their wealth elsewhere, and interesting themselves but little in the welfare of Florence. Instead of this, they so thoroughly made themselves one with Florence that her history and theirs are bound up together. They gloried in her glory; they increased it in countless ways; and they so completely identified themselves with all that does honour to Florence that it is herself she would most honour in honouring them.

To obliterate their memory from Florence is impossible. Well chosen was their motto "*Semper*" which the earlier members of the family adopted.[1] Wherever we turn in that city reminiscences of them confront us. The Medici Palace, the home of their earlier days, still stands, solemn and grand, as when it was "the hotel of the princes of the whole world" and memorable for much else besides. Castello speaks to us of Maria Salviati and her gallant soldier husband. The Piazza Sta. Trinità with its grave column of Justice, the

[1] Vol. i. p. 186.

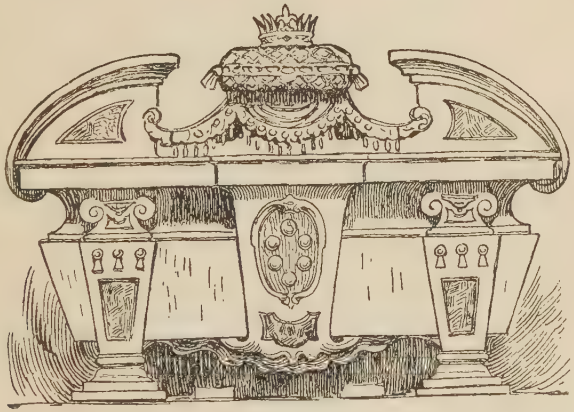
Ponte Vecchio with its strange "Passaggio," and the broad sweep of the Ponte Sta. Trinità, bring to our minds the iron-handed but capable ruler Cosimo I. The Boboli gardens are eloquent of Eleonora di Toledo and her band of healthy children. The spacious Pitti Palace, the home of the family's later days, is still the royal residence of Tuscany as when the beautiful Isabella danced and sang and led all social functions there. The great mausoleum reminds us of Ferdinand I. and his prophetic speech. Poggio Imperiale, and the pictures in the long gallery over the Arno, recall Maria Maddalena, with her accomplished sisters-in-law Eleonora, Caterina, and Claudia, and her lively daughters, Maria Cristina, Margherita, and Anna. In the Uffizi and Pitti Galleries we are surrounded by mementoes of the three talented brothers, Ferdinand II., Giovanni Carlo, and Leopold. And everywhere in crowded museums and galleries we see pictures, statues, bronzes, gems, vases, inlaid tables, costly cabinets, and other objects of art innumerable, every one of which has been examined with interest and eventually purchased by some member of this family.

As we stand in the magnificent mausoleum where their line comes to an end, and, surrounded by their great porphyry monuments,[1] finished with the workmanship given to a costly gem, think of this family's long history, their gifts to their country[2] and to Europe, and their last gift to Florence of so much that is precious to all the

[1] Plates CII. and CIII.

[2] Seen best when the Florence of to-day is compared with Ferrara, Mantua, Parma, and other capitals of former rival states.

world, we realise something of what the Medici were and did, and feel that they were indeed no ordinary people, and that their works were of the kind that "survives the funeral fires" and endures when tombs and monuments have crumbled into dust.



# EPILOGUE

It has been said by one who felt the grandeur of their history, "Let the Medici rest in peace in their tombs of marble and porphyry; for they have done more for the glory of the world than any king, prince, or emperor."[1] But they did more than that; and we must not in their case say: "Sic transit gloria mundi." While other rulers of their time have left nothing but a memory of their own personal glory, that glory which we know passes so utterly away, the Medici have left something more lasting than that.

They are all past and gone now, all these Medici whose lives we have been following, and those also whose story intermingles with theirs: Pico della Mirandola, the bright and beautiful sunbeam; Savonarola, the martyred reformer; Bourbon, the sad and ruined soldier; the three great antagonists, Charles, Francis, and Henry; all that "glorious company" of the great in Art, and many other distinguished names; all their hopes, ambitions, wrong-doings, and sorrows are in the grave now. Some, setting before them a purely selfish aim and striving after nothing really great, have left nothing behind them except it be a name on which men cast contempt. Others

[1] Alexandre Dumas.

(whether as artists, scholars, or rulers), aspiring after some aim higher than this, have left behind them things which still shed a blessing of one kind or another on mankind, and so their memory is honoured. Of all those whose names have passed before us the great in Art, at any rate, have left behind them works which are still a source of good to mankind, giving it its highest form of enjoyment, and ever drawing it upwards from all that is trivial and ignoble. That we still possess these is due in large measure to the Medici. And greater even than this is their other work, the resuscitation of Learning, which has spread knowledge far and wide, with benefits to mankind that are immeasurable. *This* is the glory that the Medici have; and this glory will not pass away.

FINIS.

# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX I

## GENEALOGICAL TREE OF THE MEDICI.

**GIOVANNI (DI BICCI) = PICCARDA BUERI.**
*b.* 1360; *d.* 1428.

Cosimo (Pater Patriae) = Contessina de' Bardi.
*b.* 1389; *d.* 1464.

Piero (il Gottoso) = Lucrezia Tornabuoni
*b.* 1416; *d.* 1469. *b.* 1425; *d.* 1482.

Giovanni = Ginevra degli Albizzi.
*b.* 1421; *d.* 1463.

Maria = Leopetto Rossi.

Luigi Rossi.

Bianca = Guglielmo de' Pazzi.

Nannina = Bernardo Rucellai.

Lorenzo (il Magnifico) = Clarice Orsini
*b.* 1449; *d.* 1492. *b.* 1453; *d.* 1587.

Giuliano
*b.* 1453; *d.* 1478.

Giulio (Clement VII.)
*b.* 1478; *d.* 1534.

Alessandro
*b.* 1511; *d.* 1537.
= Margaret, daughter of Charles V.
*b.* 1521; *d.* 1586.

Pietro (the Unfortunate) = Alfonsina Orsini
*b.* 1471; *d.* 1503. *b.* 1472; *d.* 1519.

Giovanni (Leo X.)
*b.* 1476; *d.* 1521.

Giuliano (Duc de Nemours) = Philiberte of Savoy
*b.* 1479; *d.* 1516. *b.* 1498; *d.* 15 4.

Ippolito
*b.* 1509; *d.* 1535.

Maddalena = Francesco Cibò.
*b.* 1472; *d.* 1519.

Innocenzio Cibò.

Lucrezia = Jacopo Salviati.

Giovanni Salviati.

Maria = Giovanni delle Bande Nere.
*b.* 1499; *d.* 1543.

Maria
*d.* 1487.

Contessina = Piero Ridolfi.

Niccolò Ridolfi.

Lorenzo (Duke of Urbino)
*b.* 1492; *d.* 1519.

Madeleine de la Tour D'Auvergne
*b.* 1501; *d.* 1519.

Catherine de' Medici = Henry II. of France
*b.* 1519; *d.* 1589. *b.* 1517; *d.* 1559.

Clarice = Filippo Strozzi
*b.* 1493; *d.* 1528. *d.* 1537.

Piero = Laudomia de' Medici.
*d.* 1558.

Roberto = Maddalena de' Medici.

Francis II.
*b.* 1543; *d.* 1560.
= Mary Queen of Scots.

Elisabetta
*b.* 154 ; *d.* 1568
= Philip II. of Spain.

Claude = Henry, Duc de Lorraine.
*b.* 1547.

Christine = Ferdinand I. of Tuscany.
*b.* 1565; *d.* 1636.

Charles IX.
*b.* 1550; *d.* 1574.
= Elizabeth of Austria.

Henry III.
*b.* 1551; *d.* 1589.
= Louise de Vaudemont.

Marguerite
*b.* 1553.
= Henry of Navarre.

Francis, Duc d'Alençon
*b.* 1555; *d.* 1584.

Lorenzo = Semiramide d'Appiano.
*b.* 1463; *d.* 1507.

Pier Francesco
*d.* 1530.
= Maria Soderini

Averardo.

Vincenzo.

Ginevra.

Lorenzino
*b.* 1515; *d.* 1547.

Giuliano (Bishop of Berziers).

Laudomia = Piero St

1. Archduchess Joanna = Francis I. = 2. Bianca Capello
of Austria *b.* 1541; *d.* 1587. *b.* 1543; *d.* 1587.
*b.* 1547; *d.* 1578.

Maria
*b.* 1540; *d.* 1557.

Eleonora
*b.* 1565.
= Vincenzo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua

Romola (died as a child).

Isabella (died as a child).

Anna
*b.* 1569; *d.* 1588.

Maria
*b.* 1573; *d.* 1642.
= Henry IV. of France.

Louis XIII. of France.

Henrietta Maria
= Charles I. of England.

Elisabetta
= Philip IV. of Spain.

Eleonora
= Emperor Ferdinand II.

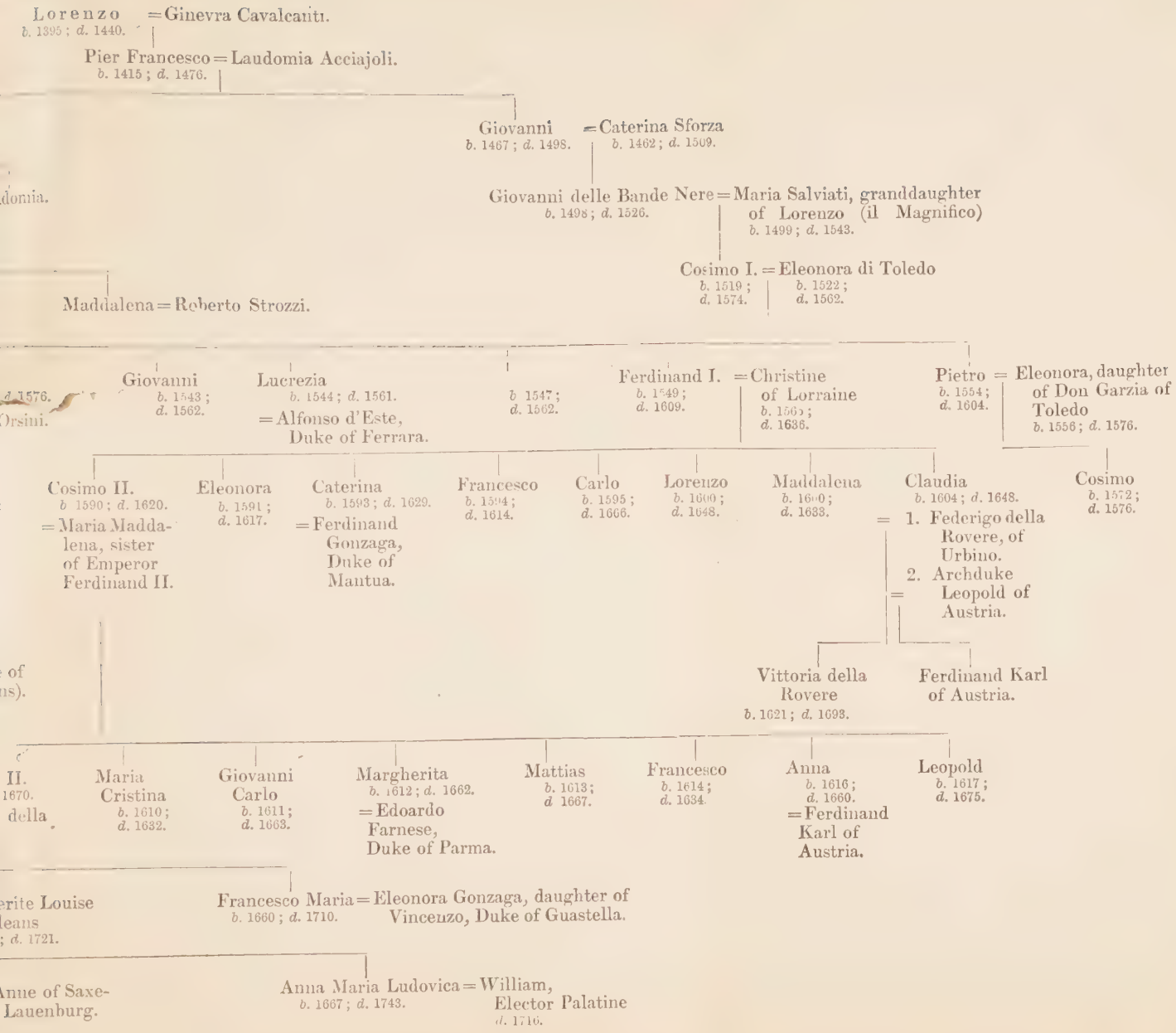
Vincenzo.

Ferdinand.

Cosimo III. = M
*b.* 1642; *d.* 1723.

Ferdinand = Violante Beatrice of Bavaria
*b.* 1663; *d.* 1713. *b.* 1672; *d.* 1731.

Giovanni Gasto
*b.* 1671; *d.* 1737.


Lorenzo =Ginevra Cavalcanti.
b. 1395; d. 1440.
Pier Francesco =Laudomia Acciajoli.
b. 1415; d. 1476.
Giovanni =Caterina Sforza
b. 1467; d. 1498. b. 1462; d. 1509.
Giovanni delle Bande Nere =Maria Salviati, granddaughter of Lorenzo (il Magnifico)
b. 1498; d. 1526. b. 1499; d. 1543.
Cosimo I. =Eleonora di Toledo
b. 1519; d. 1574. b. 1522; d. 1562.
Maddalena =Roberto Strozzi.
Giovanni b. 1543; d. 1562.
Lucrezia b. 1544; d. 1561. =Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara.
b. 1547; d. 1562.
Ferdinand I. b. 1549; d. 1609. =Christine of Lorraine b. 1565; d. 1636.
Pietro b. 1554; d. 1604. = Eleonora, daughter of Don Garzia of Toledo b. 1556; d. 1576.
Cosimo II. b. 1590; d. 1620. =Maria Maddalena, sister of Emperor Ferdinand II.
Eleonora b. 1591; d. 1617.
Caterina b. 1593; d. 1629. =Ferdinand Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua.
Francesco b. 1594; d. 1614.
Carlo b. 1595; d. 1666.
Lorenzo b. 1600; d. 1648.
Maddalena b. 1600; d. 1633.
Claudia b. 1604; d. 1648. = 1. Federigo della Rovere, of Urbino. 2. Archduke Leopold of Austria.
Cosimo b. 1572; d. 1576.
Vittoria della Rovere b. 1621; d. 1693.
Ferdinand Karl of Austria.
Maria Cristina b. 1610; d. 1632.
Giovanni Carlo b. 1611; d. 1663.
Margherita b. 1612; d. 1662. =Edoardo Farnese, Duke of Parma.
Mattias b. 1613; d. 1667.
Francesco b. 1614; d. 1634.
Anna b. 1616; d. 1660. =Ferdinand Karl of Austria.
Leopold b. 1617; d. 1675.
Francesco Maria b. 1660; d. 1710. =Eleonora Gonzaga, daughter of Vincenzo, Duke of Guastella.
Anna Maria Ludovica b. 1667; d. 1743. =William, Elector Palatine d. 1716.

# APPENDIX X

## POPES FROM MARTIN V. (1417) TO CLEMENT IX. (1670)

| | |
|---|---|
| Martin V. | 1417-1431 |
| Eugenius IV. | 1431-1447 |
| Nicholas V. (Parentucelli) | 1447-1455 |
| Calixtus III. | 1455-1458 |
| Pius II. (Piccolomini) | 1458-1464 |
| Paul II. | 1464-1471 |
| Sixtus IV. | 1471-1484 |
| Innocent VIII. (Cibò) | 1484-1492 |
| Alexander VI. (Borgia) | 1492-1503 |
| Pius III. (Piccolomini) | 1503 |
| Julius II. (Della Rovere) | 1503-1513 |
| Leo X. (Medici) | 1513-1521 |
| Adrian VI. (Adrian Dedel of Utrecht) | 1521-1523 |
| Clement VII. (Medici) | 1523-1534 |
| Paul III. (Farnese) | 1534-1550 |
| Julius III. | 1550-1555 |
| Marcellus II. | 1555 |
| Paul IV. (Caraffa) | 1555-1559 |
| Pius IV. (Medici of Milan) | 1559-1565 |
| Pius V. (Ghislieri) | 1565-1572 |
| Gregory XIII. | 1572-1585 |
| Sixtus V. (Peretti) | 1585-1590 |
| Urban VII. | 1590 |
| Gregory XIV. | 1590-1591 |
| Innocent IX. | 1591-1592 |
| Clement VIII. | 1592-1605 |
| Leo XI. (Medici of Naples) | 1605 |
| Paul V. (Borghese) | 1605-1621 |
| Gregory XV. (Ludovisi) | 1621-1623 |
| Urban VIII. (Barberini) | 1623-1644 |
| Innocent X. (Pamfili) | 1644-1655 |
| Alexander VII. (Chigi) | 1655-1667 |
| Clement IX. (Rospigliosi) | 1667-1670 |

# APPENDIX XI

## EMPERORS FROM 1400 TO 1737

| | |
|---|---|
| Rupert | 1400-1410 |
| Sigismund | 1410-1438 |
| Albert II. | 1438-1440 |
| Frederick III. | 1440-1493 |
| Maximilian I. | 1493-1519 |
| Charles V. | 1519-1555 |
| Ferdinand I. | 1555-1564 |
| Maximilian II. | 1564-1576 |
| Rudolph II. | 1576-1612 |
| Matthias | 1612-1619 |
| Ferdinand II. | 1619-1637 |
| Ferdinand III. | 1637-1658 |
| Leopold I. | 1658-1705 |
| Joseph I. | 1705-1710 |
| Charles VI. | 1710-1737 |

# APPENDIX XII

## COSIMO II.'S BROTHERS AND SISTERS

| | NAME. | BORN. | DIED. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Eleonora . | 1591 | 1617 | Engaged to Philip III. of Spain. Died unmarried at the age of twenty-six. |
| | Caterina . | 1593 | 1629 | Married in 1617 the Duke of Mantua. After becoming a widow in 1626 was made Governor of Siena. |
| | Francesco . | 1594 | 1614 | Took up the career of arms, but died at the age of twenty. |
| | Carlo . . | 1595 | 1666 | Became a cardinal, and resided at Rome, becoming Deacon of the Sacred College. Died at seventy-one. |
| Twins | Lorenzo . | 1600 | 1648 | Failed in various projects, and died at forty-eight. |
| Twins | Maddalena . | 1600 | 1633 | Became a nun in the convent of the Crocetta. |
| | Claudia . | 1604 | 1648 | Married in 1620 the only son of the Duke of Urbino, but was soon left a widow. Married a second time in 1625 the Archduke Leopold of the Tyrol. Ruled the Tyrol as Regent on behalf of her son from 1632 to 1646. |

# APPENDIX XIII

## FERDINAND II.'S BROTHERS AND SISTERS

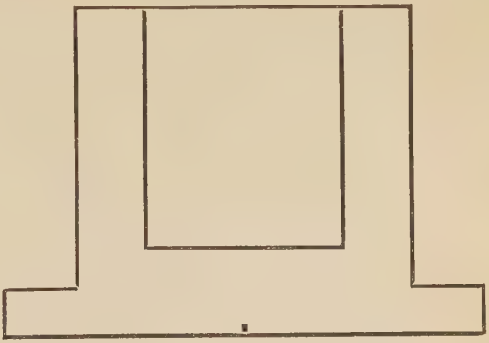
| NAME. | BORN. | DIED. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maria Cristina (twin sister of Ferdinand) | 1610 | 1632 | Died unmarried at the age of twenty-two. |
| Giovanni Carlo | 1611 | 1663 | Made a cardinal in 1644. Died at the age of fifty-two. |
| Margherita | 1612 | 1662 | Married in 1628 the Duke of Parma. |
| Mattias | 1613 | 1667 | Served with distinction in the Thirty Years' War. Afterwards commanded the Tuscan army, and was Governor of Siena. Died at fifty-four, unmarried. |
| Francesco | 1614 | 1634 | Took up the career of arms, but died of the plague in the camp of the Imperial army before Ratisbon at the age of twenty. |
| Anna | 1616 | 1660 | Married in 1643 Ferdinand Karl, Archduke of the Tyrol. |
| Leopold | 1617 | 1675 | Made a cardinal at the age of fifty, and died at fifty-eight. |

# APPENDIX XIV

ND PLAN OF THE PITTI PALACE, SHOWING THE PORTIONS BUILT RESPECTIVELY BY COSIMO I., COSIMO II., AND FERDINAND II.

(*N.B.*—All three plans are drawn to the same scale.)

II. AS EXTENDED BY COSIMO II.



Façade.

Three stories high. Each story contains about fifty principal rooms.

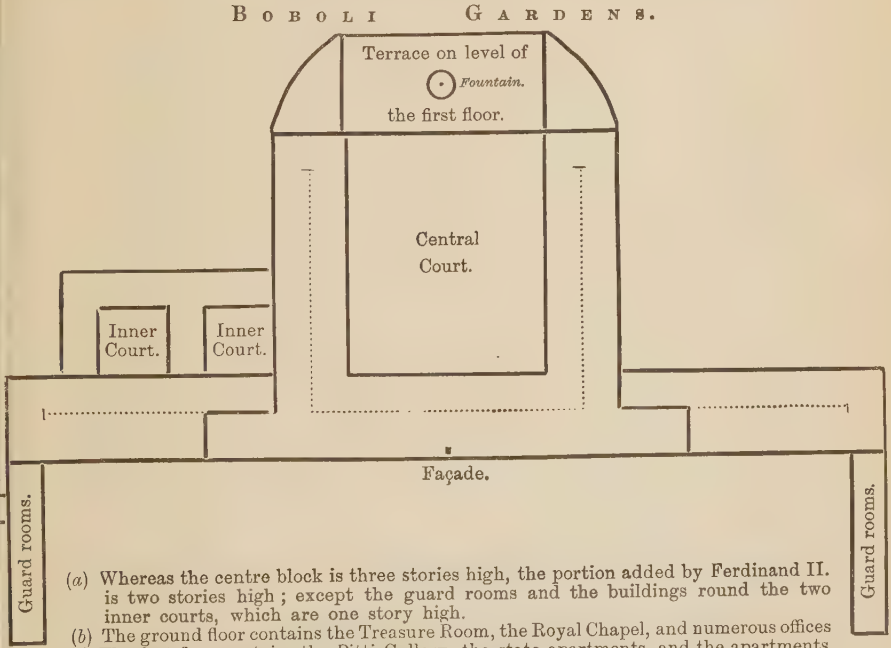
AS BUILT BY COSIMO I.

Façade.

Three stories high.

III. THE PALACE AS EXTENDED BY FERDINAND II.

(The present palace).




(*a*) Whereas the centre block is three stories high, the portion added by Ferdinand II. is two stories high; except the guard rooms and the buildings round the two inner courts, which are one story high.

(*b*) The ground floor contains the Treasure Room, the Royal Chapel, and numerous offices

(*c*) The first floor contains the Pitti Gallery, the state apartments, and the apartments occupied by the late King of Italy.

(*d*) The upper floor contains—in the right wing the apartments used by the present King of Italy when in Florence; in the left wing the apartments kept for guests of the court; and in the centre the apartments formerly occupied by the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

(*e*) Above the upper floor is an extensive range of attics, capable of accommodating a very large number of domestic servants.

(*f*) The dotted lines denote the interior corridors, with rooms on both sides.

(*g*) The central court is 170 feet by 130 feet.

# APPENDIX XVI

## PERUZZI DE' MEDICI

(*Taken from the Royal Compilation of Heraldry of Italy, Vol. VIII.*)

Pietro Paolo, whom the Electress Anna Maria Ludovica discovered (by the genealogical tree which she had caused to be drawn up) to be her nearest of kin, left a son, Averardo. The latter had two children: a son, Pietro Paolo, and a daughter, Anna Luigia. The son never married; the daughter, Anna Luigia, married the Cavaliere Bindo Peruzzi, the great-grandfather of the present Marchese Peruzzi de' Medici, the family taking the name of Medici attached to that of Peruzzi in consequence of this marriage, in accordance with one of the codicils of the will of the Electress Anna Maria Ludovica, who desired that this should be done in such a case in order that the name of her family might still be preserved.

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